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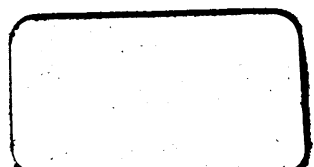
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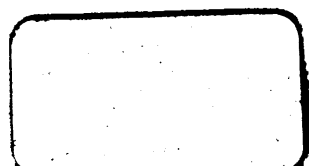
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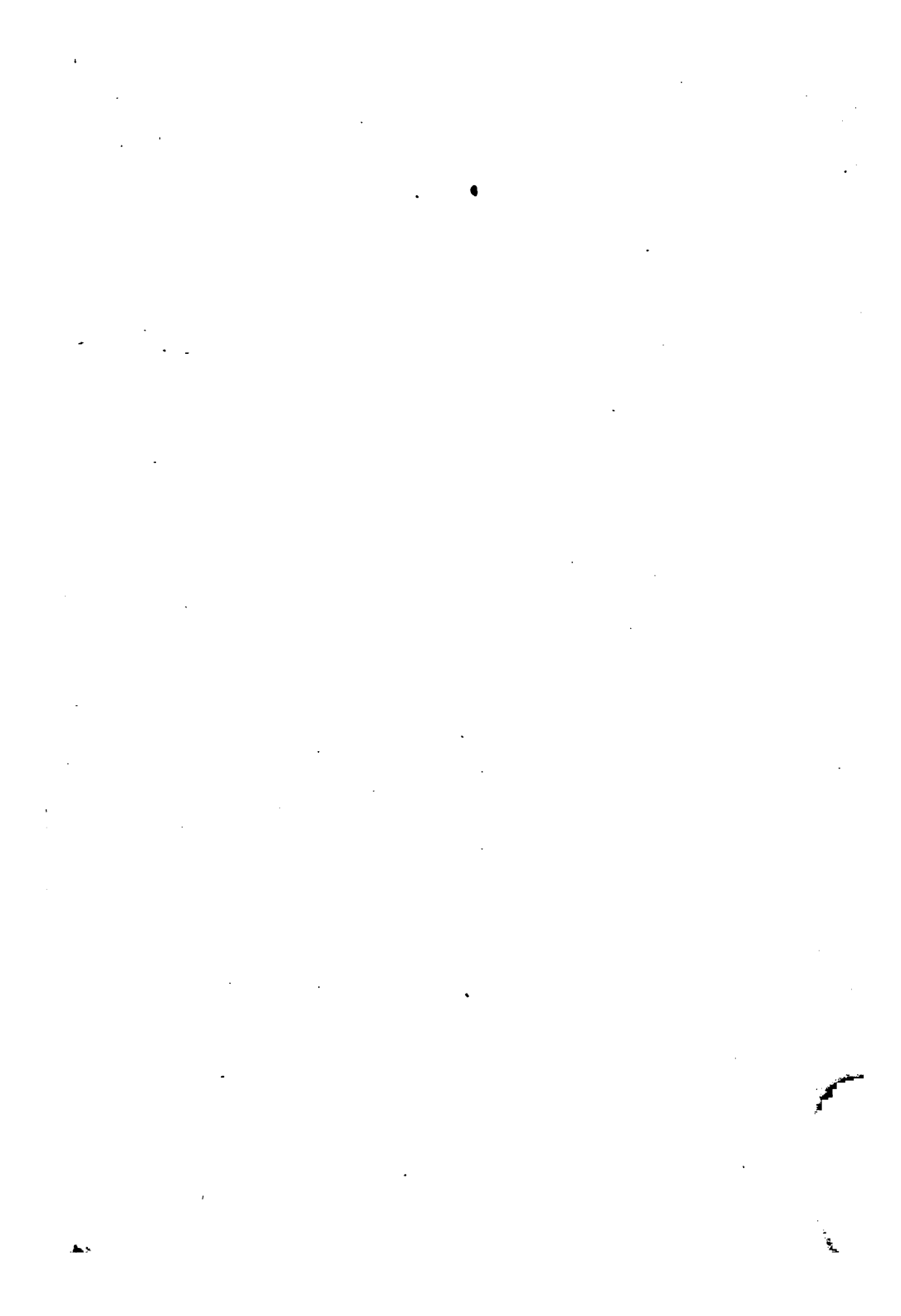
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Photo. S. S. Carter, London

Hammond, N. C.

# CRITICAL TIMES IN TURKEY

BY N. H. SPENCER

TRANSLATED BY

W. G. L. GIBSON

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

AND



Photo. H. H. Porter, Albany

Albany, N. Y.

# CRITICAL TIMES IN TURKEY

AND ENGLAND'S RESPONSIBILITY

BY

GEORGINA KING LEWIS

WITH A PREFACE BY

REV. F. B. MEYER, B.A.

AND AN INTRODUCTION BY

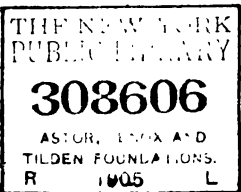
REV. R. F. HORTON, D.D.

LONDON

HODDER AND STOUGHTON

27 PATERNOSTER ROW

1905



TO  
MY FRIEND  
E. W. B.

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK  
WITH EVERY FEELING OF REGARD  
FOR UNFAILING KINDNESS  
DURING MY JOURNEYS  
TO THE EAST.

Stevens, June 1/08. 218





## PREFACE

PARDON the confession, gentle reader, but I, who commend these pages to you and urge you to read them, must confess to having found them terribly hard reading; not because the style is devoid of interest, nor because the pages are destitute of incident and colour, but because my eyes have been too filmed with tears to see, or my blood has run too hot and fast for me to keep still.

Yet surely we should not shrink from reading an unadorned recital of horrors, which our fellow-Christians, in many cases as refined and sensitive as ourselves, have had to endure from a brutal and raging soldiery, or heartless officials. Is it not part of our fellowship with Christ's sufferings, to acquaint ourselves with

what His people are bearing for His sake? Should we not allow the uttermost anguish of these Balkan Christians to soak into our souls and move them, that thus we may watch with Christ?

The heart must be a stone which does not go out in sympathy to that long-suffering people whom the late Mr. Gladstone once, in my hearing, compared to the soft sand, which, though incapable of bearing harvests of its own, protects the fertile lands beyond. Thus for centuries these representatives of early Christian races have borne the brunt of Moslem misrule, thereby freeing Europe from "the unspeakable Turk."

And what shall we say of the noble woman, who, as though she were the very hand of the healing Christ, has traversed those desolated provinces filled with a Divine compassion, and intent on alleviating an infinite misery? God bless her, and multiply her in thousands like-minded.

But what will Great Britain do? Will no recital of anguish arouse her? Is her power given for self-aggrandisement only? Will no statesman tell the Sultan, who is as great a

## PREFACE

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coward as tyrant, that he must give immediate redress, and appoint a Christian Governor?

I trust that this booklet may arouse a storm of righteous indignation and lead to strenuous action. Then there will be some harvest for the sowing of martyr-blood, and Great Britain will be saved from indelible disgrace.

F. B. MEYER.



## INTRODUCTION

**T**HIS little book is the still small voice of our national conscience recalling our responsibility for the condition of the Christian population of Turkey, and pleading with the country to remember and consider.

But the still small voice is a trumpet-call to those whose hearts are not hardened by luxury, or selfishness, or political passion. We have been told frequently that to recognise our national shortcomings is unpatriotic, but no one can read these pages without the conviction that the traitors to England are they who have stained the country's honour by refusing to fulfil her pledges, and have plunged into ruin and despair helpless populations that relied upon her word.

The reader would do well to begin by reading the eighth chapter, if he can bear to contemplate these unendurable sufferings and

wrongs. After realising the condition of the Macedonians and the responsibility of England for it, he may relieve his mind by reading the previous chapters, which are the record of a beautiful and self-denying attempt to relieve some of the wants of the sufferers from Turkish oppression.

In this story, lit up by humour and picturesque with interesting details, he will see how a little group of benevolent people has been making atonement, as it were in Christ's name, for the sins of our nation. The Christian Governments of Europe, with smooth flattery to the Sultan and cynical platitudes about maintaining law and order, have left the people whom they pledged themselves at Berlin to protect, to outrage, murder, and extermination. But a few Christian hearts, of whom the writer of this book is one, have carried the oil and wine to pour into the open wound; and their noble efforts will surely rouse our apathetic Government to a real though tardy repentance.

It will be found that the book, despite its tragic subject, is full of interest and charm. For a vivid picture of Turkey as she is, and

## INTRODUCTION

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of Turks as they are, and of that extraordinary religion which produces such characters and such a Government, nothing could be more serviceable to busy people, who cannot engage in elaborate research, than this living little book.

I feel it an honour to be associated even in this very slight way with an enterprise of so lofty a purpose and so Christlike a spirit.

ROBERT F. HORTON.

HAMPSTEAD, *March* 17, 1905.





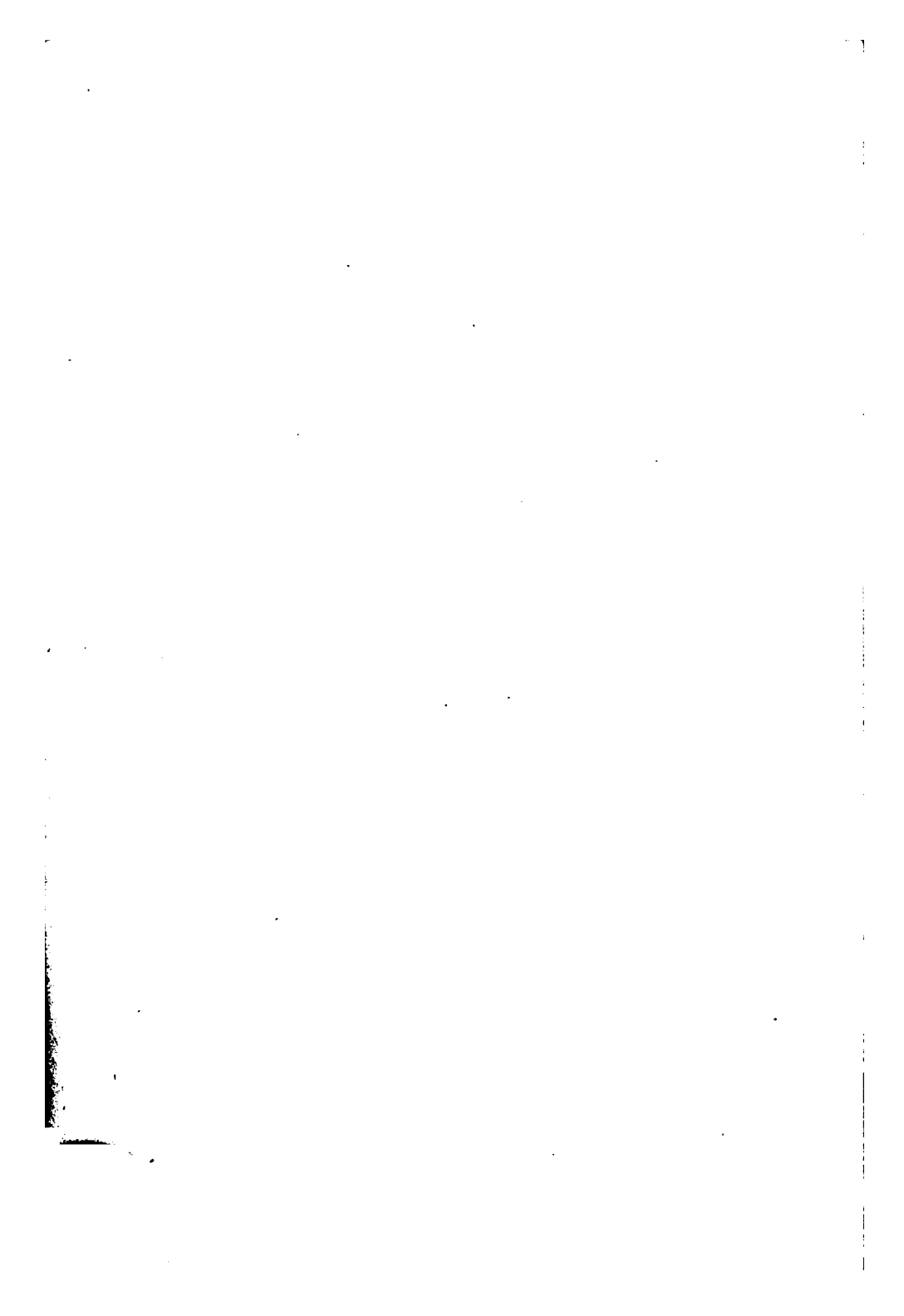
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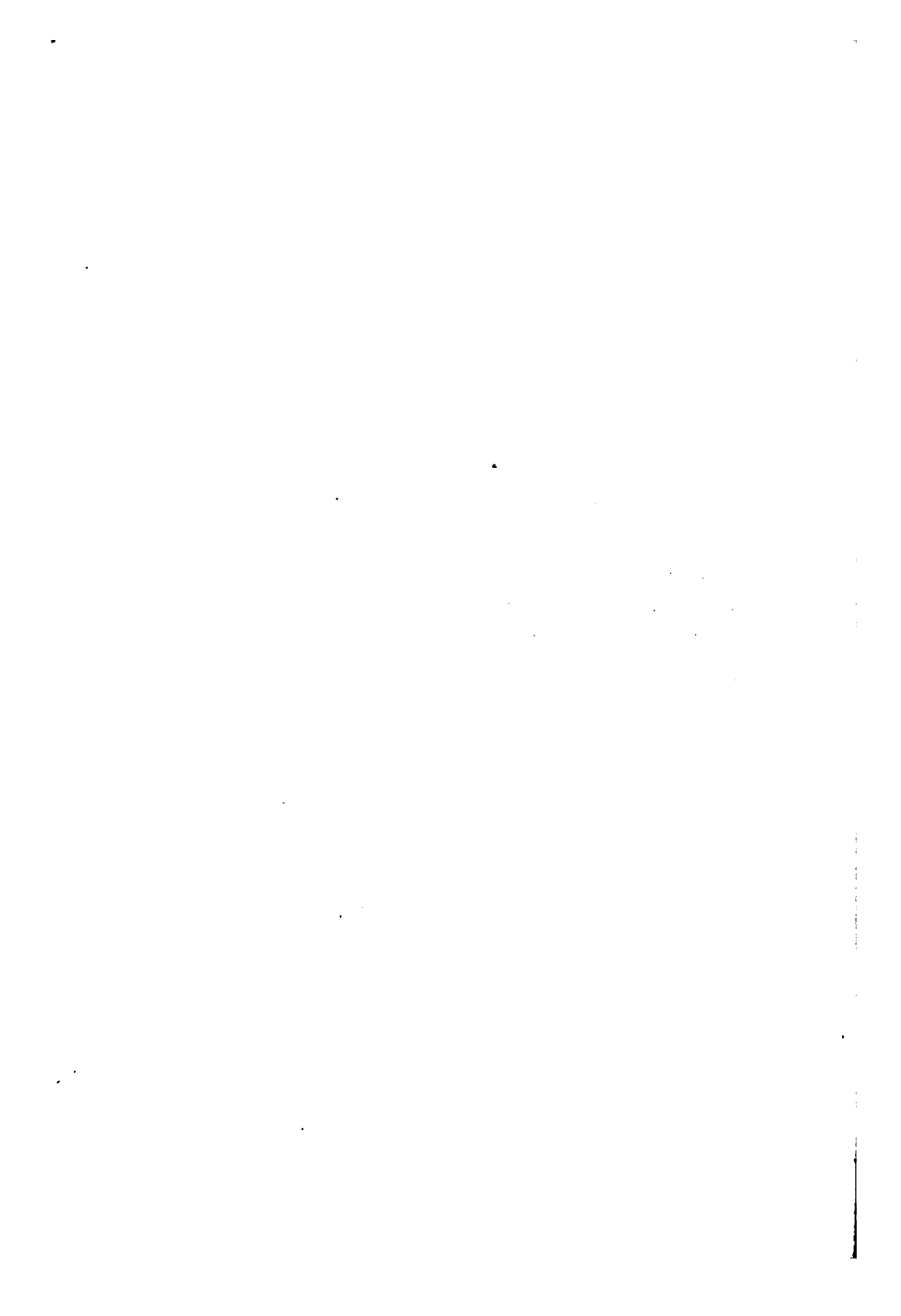
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I cannot refrain from now acknowledging with heartfelt thanks the courtesy I have personally received in my representations to Lord Lansdowne, and the effective help I have had from other English officials at home and in the Near East.



## AN APOLOGY

"God give us men! A time like this demands  
High minds, great hearts, true faith, and ready hands:  
Men whom the lust of office does not fill;  
Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy;  
Men who possess opinions and a will;  
Men who have honour, men who will not *lie*."



## CHAPTER I.

### AN APOLOGY

ONE naturally shrinks to-day from adding to the number of books which are continually pouring forth from the press, so that I feel it almost necessary to make an apology for contributing one more to the number.

When, however, a cause lies heavily on one's heart, and a longing is born to help others who have by close contact come to be one's friends, it ceases to be a personal matter whether or not the sufferers should be permitted to plead their own cause. If increased sympathy be for their good, it becomes imperative. After the terrible reports from the Near East of the distress following upon the massacres in 1903, a considerable sum of money was raised in England for the relief of the suffering

#### 4 CRITICAL TIMES IN TURKEY

Christians. It fell to my lot to distribute a portion of this, as, with a friend, I had offered to go out and see what relief was requisite.

This led to my spending the winter of 1903 in Bulgaria and Turkey, in order to supply such things as were absolutely necessary for the maintenance of some of the people during their bitterly cold winter season. In the early spring I returned home to hold meetings to interest my countrymen in the responsibility we, as a nation, had taken upon ourselves under the Berlin Treaty.

Hearing a few months later that the refugees were coming back in crowds to their own land, and that no one was there to help or welcome them, it seemed incumbent on me to go out and do what I could, that they might feel they were not altogether forsaken. For this purpose I made my second journey, in the spring of 1904. Again I returned home for a short rest, after a somewhat fatiguing time of work and rough travelling. My further intention was to raise some more money, for I felt that I must go back in the autumn to help the people in Thrace when the fugitives from



that country would probably be compelled to re-establish themselves on the land.

So, for the third time, I went to the Near East, and as my visits altogether brought me into close touch with these Balkan Christians, it has seemed to me that I might help their cause if I gave in book-form an account of my experiences, so as to reach a larger number of people than I could ever hope to interest by oral means.

Throughout the relief-work I was perpetually reminded that I must get down to the cause of all the popular unrest, and thus be better able to express sympathy with the peasants in their desire for justice and mercy.

Those who have studied the Eastern question know better than I do all that can be said on behalf of the reasonable claims put forth by the Christian subjects of Turkey, but the ordinary man and woman, I am convinced, is absolutely ignorant of our responsibilities as a nation under the Treaty of Berlin.

I have a better opinion of my countrymen than to think that if they knew, if they really grasped the situation, they would sit with folded hands and do nothing.

## 6 CRITICAL TIMES IN TURKEY

"For it was never in my soul  
To act so ill a part;  
But evil is wrought by want of thought  
As well as by want of heart."

The ordinary "man in the street" often knows little of what our Government is doing or not doing, but when he does know, and, moreover, feels his emotions roused, it is not a very easy matter to quiet him. It is for such persons I write, and having had an opportunity, not granted to many, of visiting Bulgaria, Macedonia, and Thrace, the homes, the villages, and their inhabitants, a short narrative of my journeys and experiences may give some idea as to what manner of people these Bulgars are.

In the long run, the noblest instincts of humanity are called forth by the sight of suffering and injustice, and as we in England know little or nothing of our brothers and sisters in the Near East whom we have allowed to be wronged, it surely becomes the duty of one who does know something of the subject to pass on the message given her again and again, to let the English people hear what she has seen and heard.\*

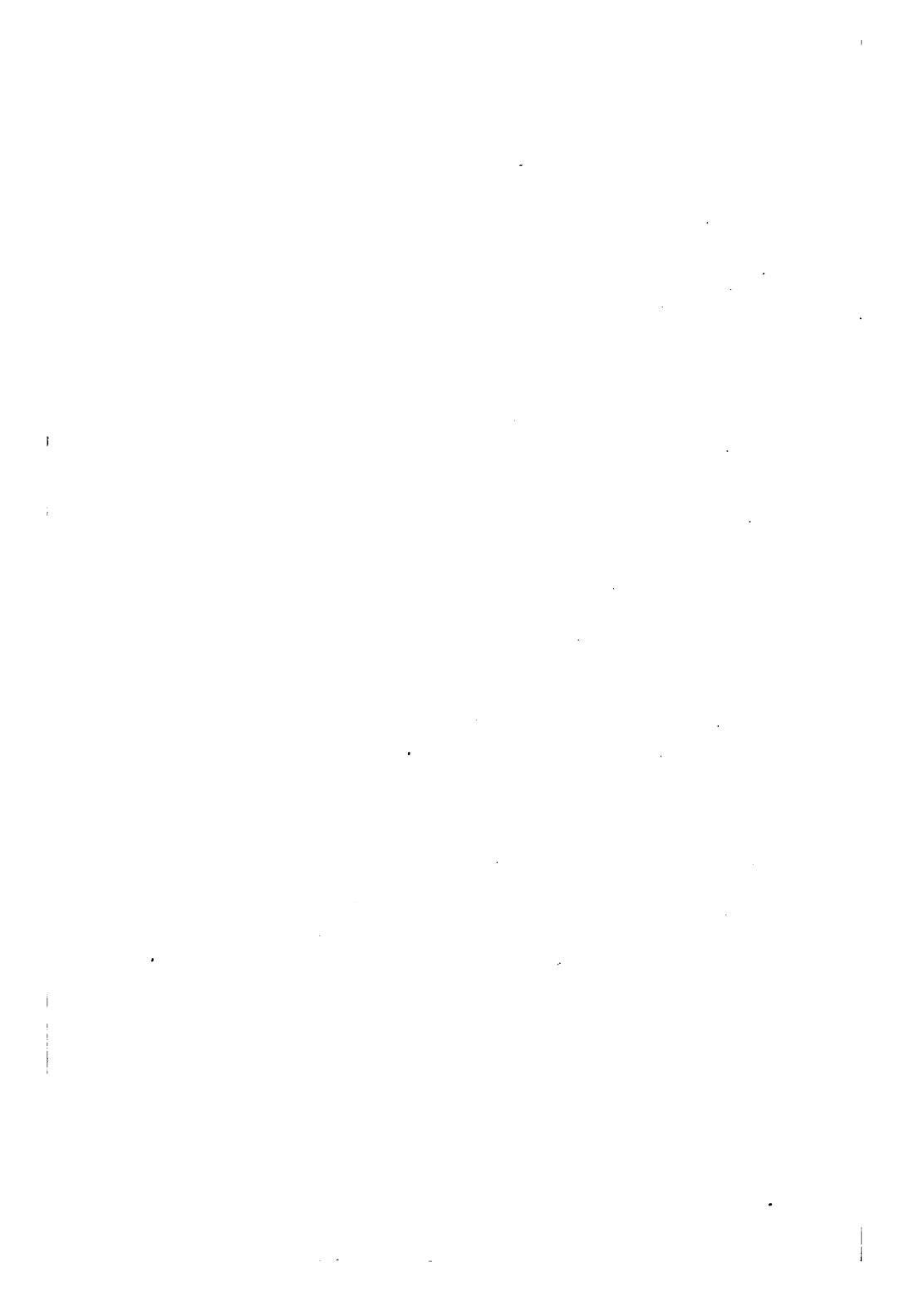
\* Since preparing my book for the press, "The Balkan

I may reason and inform, I may even move the feelings of some, but I know full well it is God alone who can make my narrative in some measure stir the hearts of men into action, and lead England to be true to herself.

I am, at least, endeavouring to carry out what I pledged myself to do one day when a poor broken-hearted woman stole into my room, and after telling me what she herself had passed through, implored me, as in Eastern fashion she wept over my hand and kissed it, to speak to the English people of the sorrows and sufferings of her people.

Poor heart! Such a request could receive only one answer — "It shall be done." What faith they still have in us! It is very wonderful. Is it to be in vain?

Question," edited by Luigi Villari, has appeared. Though this is written by experts, and deals with the past and present situation in the Near East in a most interesting manner, it will be read very largely by those who are working on political lines, leaving room, I think, for such a work as the present volume.



## THE PAST

"Shall tongues be mute, when deeds are wrought  
Which well might shame extremest hell?  
Shall freemen lock the indignant thought?  
Shall Pity's bosom cease to swell?  
Shall Honour bleed? Shall Truth succumb?  
Shall pen, and press, and soul be dumb?"

WHITTIER.

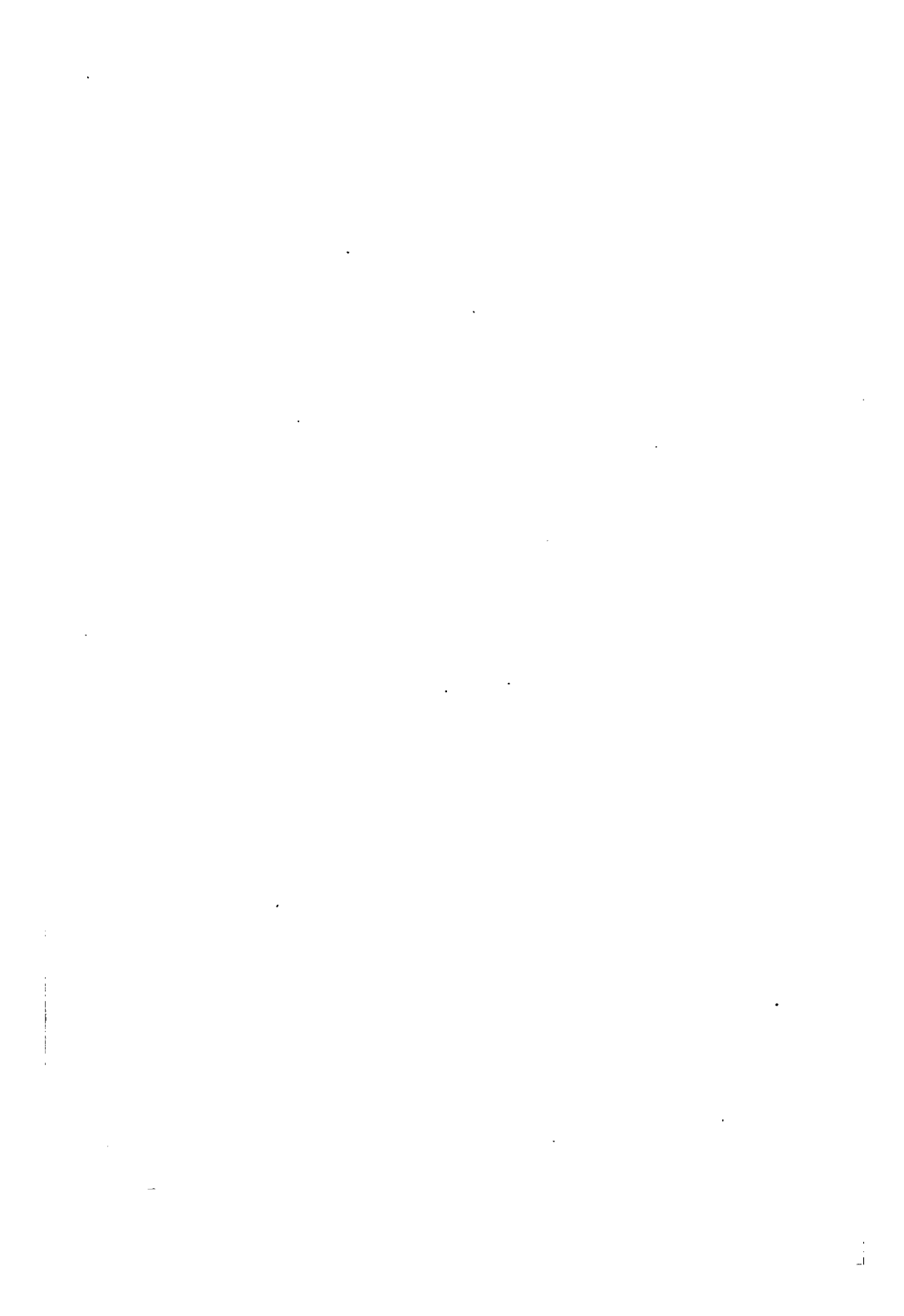


## CHAPTER II

### THE PAST

IT will be necessary to give a slight sketch of what has led up to the present condition of affairs, in order that the circumstances of the case may be understood by those who have not closely followed the great Eastern Question.

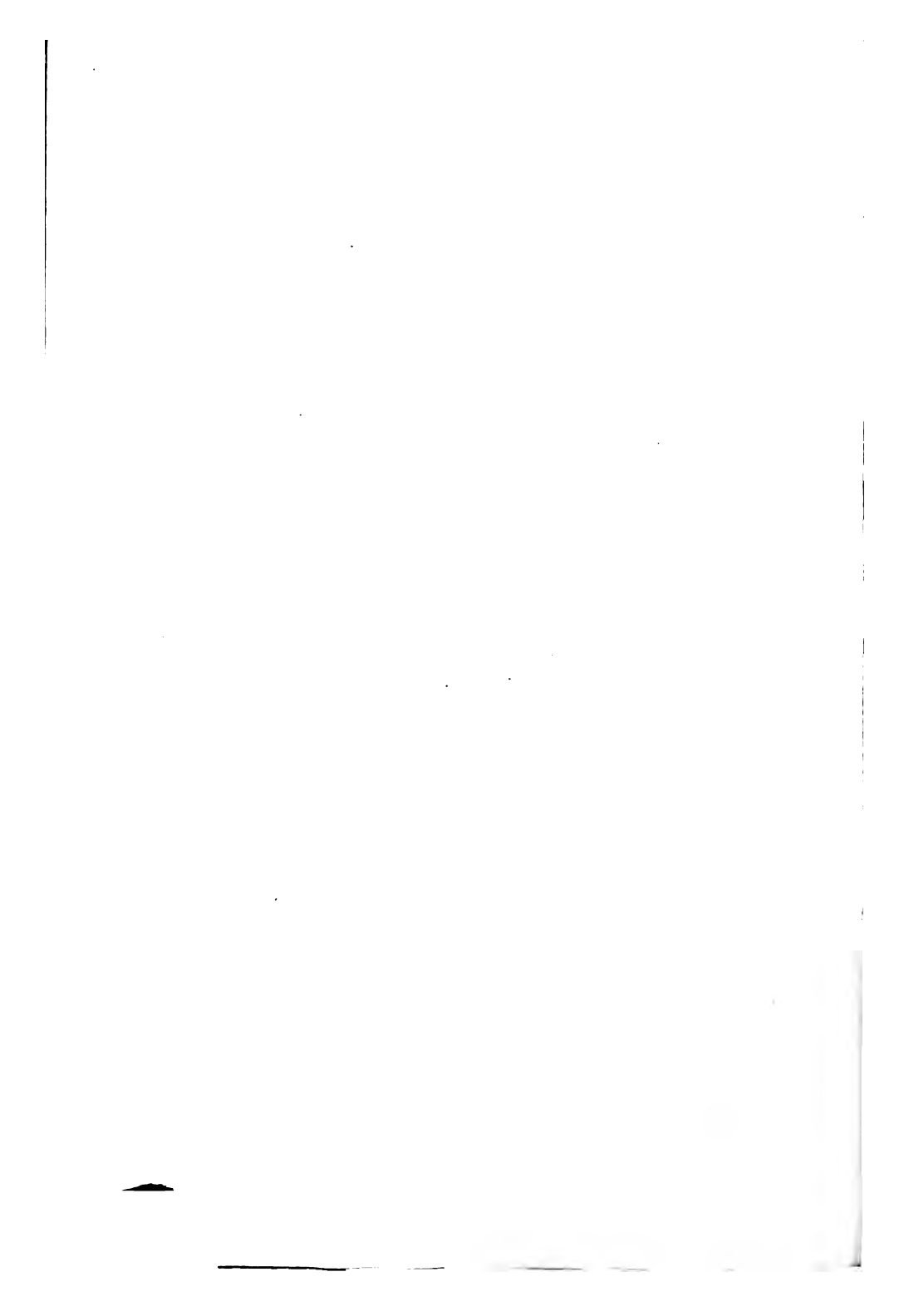
In the year 1876, Mr. Gladstone's famous pamphlet on the atrocities in Bulgaria raised such a storm of indignation throughout the civilised world that the people of that country, whose existence had been almost forgotten, have ever since become more or less a subject of interest to our nation. Turkey has always done her best, as the poor people say, "to keep herself to herself," so that outsiders shall not know





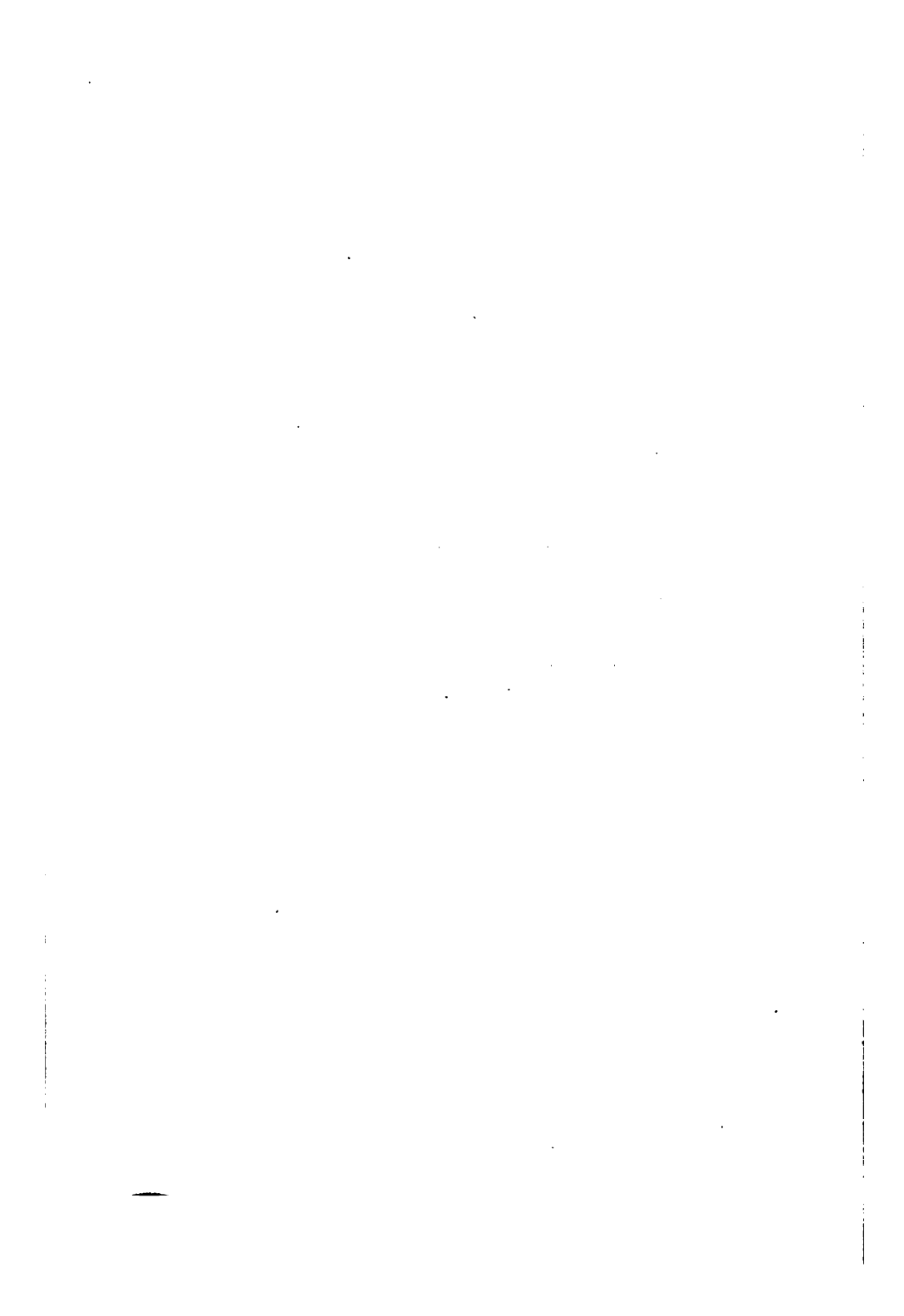
## AN APOLOGY

"God give us men! A time like this demands  
High minds, great hearts, true faith, and ready hands:  
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strength shall be highly and justly estimated by the other nations of Christendom; but I believe it to be of still more vital consequence that we should stand high in their estimation as the lovers of truth, of honour, and of openness in all our proceedings, as those who know how to cast aside the motives of narrow selfishness, and give scope to considerations of broad and lofty principle. I value our insular position, but I dread the day when we shall be reduced to a moral insularity. This setting up of our own interests, out of place in an exaggerated form beyond their proper sphere, has greatly diminished the estimation of our moral standard of action, and consequently our moral position in the world."

Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin, A. Froude, and E. Burne-Jones were roused to express their sympathy with Mr. Gladstone's utterances. Are there no voices to-day that can make themselves heard above the din of party politics, for the sake of humanity? This is no party question. We have pledged our word that we will protect these Christians from injustice, tyranny, and massacre, and

Monsieur Quillard tells us we are neither Christian nor civilised in our complicity in the frightful slaughter of these human creatures. It seems a terrible thing that our country has pledged itself, as the Bishop of Rochester has said, "up to the hilt to take care of these people," and yet that we stand calmly by, and take no heed to the cry continually sounding, "Come over and help us." Thousands and tens of thousands of English men and women are praying every day and many times a day to "Our Father," thus acknowledging the brotherhood of the race, and yet our brothers and sisters are left to die in ways I cannot describe. Their stories have been poured into my ears by long-suffering women, but the details would exclude any book from publication. Dante tells us, when in his dream he entered the Inferno, that he fell down "as one dead." I seemed to have entered the infernal regions as I heard of the violence and torture inflicted by men upon women, and upon innocent little children, and night after night, as the horrors recurred to me and I remembered the cries of the poor mothers in their helplessness,

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I longed, with an unutterable longing, to pass on the impression made upon my mind, till others should heed, and succour as I could not do.

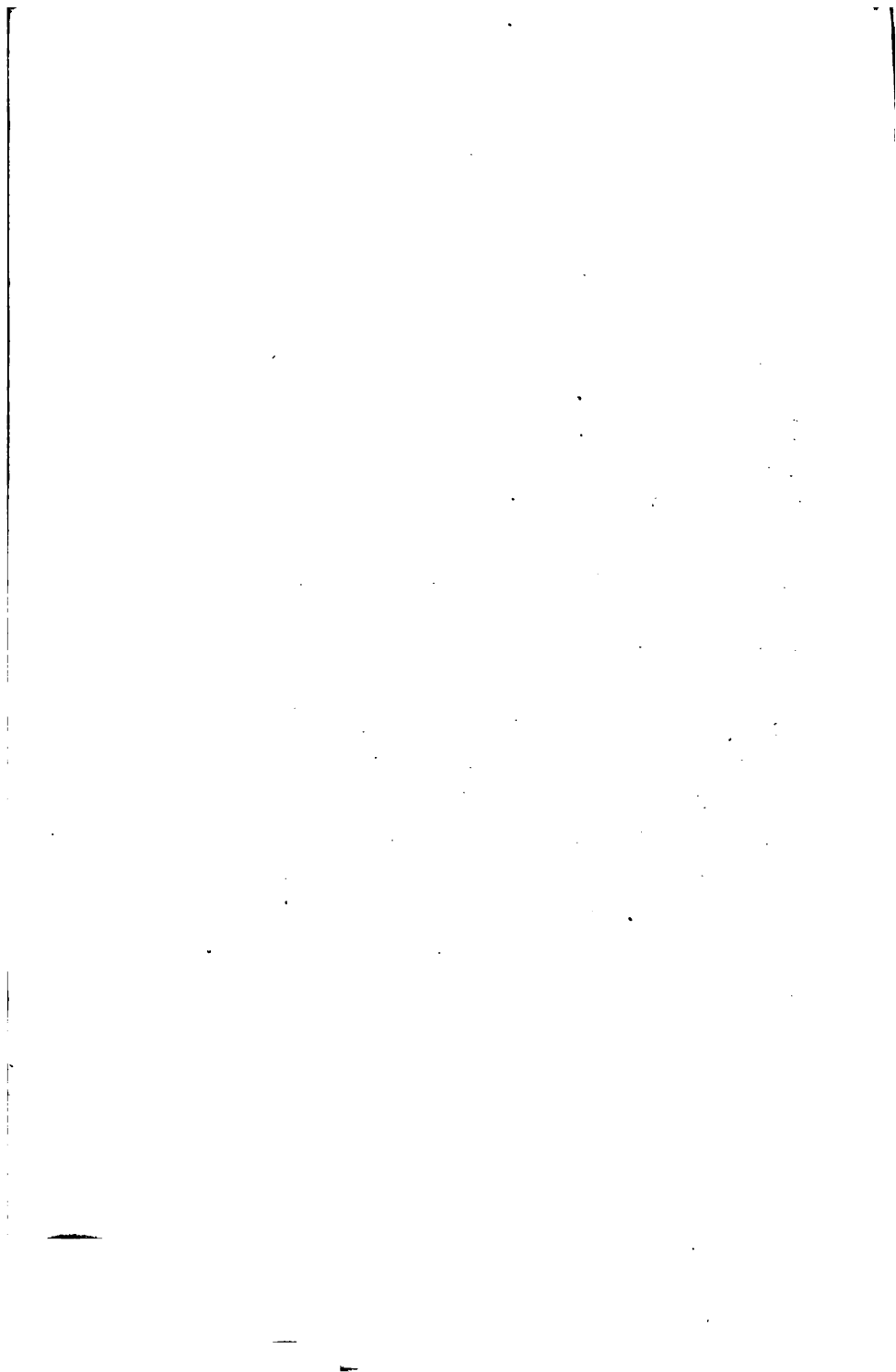
If I speak strongly, who can wonder? I want my readers to feel strongly, that out of that strength they may take action.

It is well known that no deep impression is made upon any mind by a passing sight, a momentary glance, at any object or subject. We need to return to it again and again, if it is to lay hold of us. A great deal also depends upon the vividness with which we can grasp a subject. For this reason I have endeavoured to lead my readers to see, as I saw them, the people with whom I was brought into contact, that seeing and hearing, some impressions may be lasting and effective. Attention to this subject, if associated with noble emotions, must produce sympathy, and sympathy, once roused, will lead to action. We are not callous as a nation, but it sometimes takes time to stir us up to indignation, and, where many interests are involved, we need not go far to find an excuse which may serve to absolve us from our indifference.



A little time spent on the study of these Bulgars would enable us, to a certain extent, to live over again in imagination the "dark ages," so called, of our own country.

Their method of travelling is confined to horse or mule, and journeys are taken in danger, with the uncertainty that makes even a short expedition an undertaking. They have no books with the exception of the Bible kept in their churches. They do not possess clocks and watches. Their streets at night show only at long intervals a smoky oil lamp. The dwellings, the habits, the restricted horizon of the people, all carry us back to the days of our forefathers. We must remember this, in addition to their peculiar position under the tyrannous rule of the Turk, if we are to understand the conditions of life which prevail in the Near East. We must not dwell too much upon the faults and failings which have greatly to do with the times in which the inhabitants are living.



## THE EXODUS

"Shall outraged nature cease to feel?

Shall Mercy's tears no longer flow?

Shall ruffian threats of cord and steel—

The dungeon's gloom—the assassin's blow,

Turn back the spirit roused to save

The Truth, that Country and the slave?"

WHITTIER.



## CHAPTER III

### THE EXODUS

**I**N the spring of 1903, Europe was startled one morning by reading in the daily papers of the destruction of the Ottoman Bank in Salonica, of the German Club in that town, and of a French mail-boat in the bay.

When I was in Salonica I visited the new Bank and heard the story of the outrage. It was thought at the time that the affair was organised by the revolutionary bands, but this was not the case, for it was the work of a few hot-headed, desperate Bulgars who were prepared to risk their lives in an effort on behalf of their country. The leaders of the bands had discouraged the idea, thinking it would only alienate European sympathy.

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The reply of the young men to their expostulations was as follows, and the words are worth pondering :—

“ Europe put us back under the Turk after we had been freed, promising us protection. When the European Powers had accomplished that part of the Berlin Treaty which affected them, they forgot the people whom they had sacrificed. We have pleaded for twenty-five years that their promises should be executed ; we have pointed out the insecurity of our property, of our lives, and of our women’s honour, but all to no purpose. These things must be brought home to the people who have betrayed us. The death of half-a-dozen Europeans they will feel, but every soul of us can perish with no effect on them.”

Being determined to carry out their project, they hired a shop close to the Ottoman Bank, and the supposed purchasers of the grocery stores carried baskets full of earth from the premises day by day. This went on for some time till the Bank was undermined, and then dynamite was placed below the building. The Manager was sitting at his accustomed place when the explosion occurred, and, as

he said, it was a marvel he escaped with only very slight injury. In the evening, when the quay was crowded with people, bombs were thrown, and the gas in the city was cut off. The men who planned the disturbance were sacrificed. The whole affair gave the Turks a pretext for massacre, of which they took advantage. This stirred the revolutionists to action in other parts of the country. Several risings followed, extending as far as the Adrianople Vilayet. Villages were burned, and everything was seized that the soldiers could carry away. In some cases a promise of mercy was made if the insurgents would lay down their arms. In one instance these terms were accepted by forty men, who delivered up their weapons, whereupon they were all promptly murdered.

The deeds done were so terrible that the people who remained alive fled panic-stricken from their homes and country into free Bulgaria.

It was estimated that some 40,000 men, women, and children crossed over the Turkish frontier, and it was to relieve their suffer-

## 28 CRITICAL TIMES IN TURKEY

ings that I went out in the autumn of that year.

On my first journey I was accompanied by a lady friend who had visited the East, and who kindly promised to introduce me to some of her Bulgarian friends, after which she intended returning home.

We went out by way of Berlin and Vienna.

Through some mistake, owing to two trains leaving the latter place about the same time, we found it necessary, on arriving at Budapest, to alight and drive through the city to the further station.

We soon discovered that our coachman had been imbibing more than was good for him, the consequence of which was that he whipped his poor horses in a manner to threaten the destruction of himself and his passengers. This not satisfying him, he proceeded to flog other people's horses. The drivers returned the compliment, and whipped our man into the bargain. Then he drove us into a cart, and the collision nearly dragged off one of our wheels. The police then appeared, and took us in hand. A crowd collected, and we understood that we were to be marched off to



the police-station. Then came our turn to object, which we did in truly English style. How much they understood of our expostulations I do not know, but they left us to continue our journey as we liked.

We were only just in time to register our luggage and take our seats, before the train steamed out of the station on its way to Bulgaria.

We stopped at Sofia for a couple of days, met many interesting people, gained information as to the number of refugees, their whereabouts, what the Government was doing for them, and so on.

Having mapped out the district, including fifty villages which we undertook to relieve, we decided to make Bourgas our headquarters. Bourgas is situated on the borders of the Black Sea, north of Adrianople, so that the refugees in that district had found its vicinity fairly easy of access. Though a port, it is a quiet little town, and very little shipping is to be seen.

The chief beauty, if one can use such a word in connection with Bourgas, is its sunset hues when the colouring of the Eastern sky

### 30 CRITICAL TIMES IN TURKEY

touches and transforms the rude humble dwellings and the distant hills with a glory that is most fascinating.

We arrived at five o'clock in the morning, tired with our long journey, and thankful to have reached our destination. It was quite dark at that hour, and few people were about. Vehicles are scarce in Bourgas. Two or three broken-down victorias are kept for marriage occasions, since the roads are not infrequently in such a condition that a bride, in wedding attire, could hardly skip from boulder to boulder to avoid the puddles on her way to church. There was only one funeral car in the town, and as it was kept in an open shed opposite my window, I always knew when a death had occurred. Marriages and funerals seem arranged to take place on a Sunday, which is curious, as bodies are always buried almost immediately after death.

There was no conveyance we could hire, but a few men lifted our luggage on their backs, and they, with us, walked in procession through the town, headed by a man with a lantern to show us our way.

The roads are paved with huge cobbles,

which leave convenient openings for pools of water or mud. This makes it a little difficult to get about unless one is "to the manner born," or dispenses with shoes and stockings, and, any way, walking is certainly very fatiguing.

At length we reached the inn, and climbed up some dirty wooden stairs, glad to be shown into what was to be my residence for some time to come.

It is customary in most parts of Bulgaria which are not yet widely open to civilisation, to fill every room with as many bedsteads as possible, and to charge by the bed, and as we were very English, and preferred our bedrooms to ourselves, we were obliged to pay for the use of half-a-dozen during our stay in that district. We were provided with slippers gratis—shoes being supplied in place of carpets, which latter are hung upon the walls. A good clothes-brush is considered an indispensable article in that country, and does duty for all toilet requisites. A decanter of water for drinking purposes was provided, and a special request that we might have some water for washing was granted, but I felt it to be

## 32 CRITICAL TIMES IN TURKEY

distinctly an insult to the clothes-brush. Any food beside the contents of my tea-basket, which served for breakfast and tea, had to be taken in the restaurant, the feeding-place for the business-men in the town.

Our fare was cooked in a bright yellow-coloured oil. Swimming in that liquid was the meat, called mutton, beef, or turkey, according to what we had ordered. At a distance it looked rather interesting, but on a near approach I found the appearance alone quite sufficient.

My companion, who had learned in former visits to like the fare, made me feel my education very lacking, and she certainly was quite just in accusing me of not being enterprising in the food line. Beans and chestnuts, varied with herrings when any one was inclined to fish in the Black Sea, satisfied nature's demands, while the dogs ran about and ate up the bones which were thrown to them from their master's table.

Our first efforts were directed to helping the refugees in the town, and from there we worked round to all the villages in the district, as we had promised the Bulgarian Govern-

ment to do. The officials had provided shelter for the people by allowing them to cut down trees, and build mud hovels for themselves and their families. In addition to this, bread was distributed, so that it remained for us to give the refugees additional food and clothing.

We began by calling together all the women in Bourgas and starting a large sewing-class. We gave them the materials and necessary implements, and they very quickly and skilfully made the simple under-garment which these peasants wear. We paid the women every day for the work they accomplished, and when a considerable number of the shirts were completed, these were sent off to the neighbouring hamlets. Between the hours occupied in superintendence, we prepared and packed huge bales of goods for the people at a distance, having previously gained accurate statistics as to the number and size of the families in each village. Some of the places were inaccessible, owing to the time their remoteness would oblige us to be away, but those nearer at hand were visited, and, on referring to notes made at the time, the nature

### 34 CRITICAL TIMES IN TURKEY

of those journeys will be seen: November 17th. Started at 6 a.m., in a long, springless waggon, seated on a sack. I was surrounded by baggage of one sort and another, loaves of bread, sacks of beans, food for the travellers tied up in bundles, and our rugs. My driver was dressed in true Turkish costume, with a broad red scarf round his waist, a dagger thrust into his belt, a blue cloth jacket embroidered with black braid, and a red cap, with a turban to keep it on.

A pair of horses were harnessed to the cart, and one was fastened behind, in case of an emergency—a very wise and necessary provision. A soldier on horseback led the way; then followed two doctors, who were of our party throughout the journey. Next came the cart, with its occupant enthroned on her sack, followed by the Prefect on a white charger, and two mounted soldiers brought up the rear.

The road, so called, soon became bog-land, full of huge boulders, and it was an interesting sight to watch the little horses pull the cart through the heavy mud half-way up to the axles, bump it over the boulders, skip up the bank to get a foothold, and then go lurching

down into a rut deep enough to upset the whole vehicle. Fear was lost in admiration. Our way led through forests, over stumps of trees and small shrubs, and through streams. We accomplished about two miles an hour, and this, considering the roads, was as much as could be expected. On arriving, at last, after many hours travelling, at Saramoosa, I alighted from the cart feeling very bruised and stiff, and was glad to stretch my legs and walk about. The children came running out from their huts, the mothers following, and soon I had nearly all the village surrounding me. I could not help being reminded of the commotion made in a quiet little English village when a performing bear enters, for the excitement was very much like it, as the children came timidly touching me, and then running away, but soon returning to stroke my dress, and staring at me with earnest, solemn eyes. It was very pathetic when the mothers came, kissed my hand, made the sign of the cross, and looked upwards, saying, "God has sent you to us."

What a sight it was! There were women barely clad with soiled garments that had encountered fierce weather, as they had made

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their way over the mountains, through the forests and streams, with little or nothing to eat, and no shelter when the night closed in. Women with startled faces and soft dark eyes, ever ready to overflow with tears, appealing to us in their misery. Their appearance was more eloquent than any words. Perhaps they guessed so, for they said little. And the baby-faces, with eyes that had no child-life sparkling in them, for—

“The infant babes had from their  
Mother caught the trick of grief,”

told of suffering, sorrow, and privation, more pathetically than anything else, and hard, indeed, would be the heart that could not be moved by such a sight. Those baby-faces haunt me yet. Gathering the people together we explained our purpose in visiting them, and then carefully going over the statistics given us of the families—statistics for which the Bulgarians have a perfect genius—we distributed to each in order what we considered to be necessary.

What stories they had to tell of their escapes! of how in some instances they had

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little or no clothing, and kept themselves warm by huddling together like a drove of sheep.

Women related to me how they were followed by the Turkish soldiers and outraged, some of their companions being left for dead on the road. Some gave thrilling accounts of their hiding in the forest, and then creeping along in the streams, and sleeping under the fallen leaves. One to whom I talked had been stripped of her clothing, and had to travel in sacks given her by friends, who had had compassion on them in their flight. Another had been so cut about on arms and hands and neck that the limbs were rendered useless.

Many were partially paralysed through fright, and some of the men with whom I conversed had been so cruelly treated that the marvel was they had survived to tell the tale.

Truly they could speak of having been "in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from their own countrymen, in labour and travail, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness," beaten, and stoned, and almost dying.

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These were the people I found, and my heart went out to them.

Hospitality was always offered us. We were thought worthy of the best they had, and the rough simplicity of it was amusing and quaint and made one feel how very far we were from the haunts of civilisation. It is considered quite unnecessary, from their point of view, to offer one room for each sleeper, but on being informed that English ladies do not care to spend the night in a crowd, as they do (seldom taking off their clothes for the night), the guest-room in the house of the head man in the village was given me, and cushions were spread on the floor to lie on.

After a search they found and provided me with a tin basin, ordinarily used for culinary purposes; then they poured a little water over my hands, and at once, lest I should ask for more of the precious liquid, it was hurried away. I sympathised with a friend of mine, who, when travelling in Russia, said, under similar circumstances, "I put my foot down." I said, "No, I will not be told by Asiatics how I shall wash; I will have it my own way," and I triumphed.

They think we must be very dirty to require so much washing, and we return the compliment, and consider they must be very dirty *not* to require it.

That night was not a satisfactory one. As soon as I was left alone I opened the window, and the glass fell out. Windows I found were not intended to be opened, and I might have remained contented with it closed, for the light inside attracted a whole army of moths and flies, and the open window gave them a welcome in which I did not join. I felt quite relieved that I was not asked in the morning how I had slept, for I would fain have satisfied my kind host, but could not in truth have done so.

During several weeks we spent our time with the women at the class, preparing for and undertaking our excursions into the villages, buying, cutting out, packing our goods, and haggling with drivers to take us at what we considered a fair price for our journey. On the principle of "Set a thief to catch a thief" we felt it better to keep in the background when disputes on these matters occurred, and our good Bulgarian friends, as cautious and as

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frugal as any "canny Scot," did valiant service for us, though I must acknowledge my heart smote me sometimes as to whether I was not running dangerously near to the "sweating" system, but when I expostulated, I could gain no hearing.

At last the men struck. They would carry us and our baggage no longer for such wages. Then my opportunity arrived. I with my companion appeared on the scene, after which we soon came to terms, and triumphantly I announced that we were to start off again with our baggage on the following morning.

By that time my first travelling companion had gone home, and henceforth I had the company of a bright young lady, who had lived in the country many years, and knew something of the Turkish language, as well as Bulgarian thoroughly. She proved herself a good interpreter and a most delightful friend.

It is due to the drivers to say that our journeys did considerable damage to their vehicles, and must have taken a great deal out of their plucky little steeds. They, however, became eager that we should employ them, for they said they were sure to receive

some special blessing from being engaged in such heavenly work. An account of another journey we took will give some idea of what these expeditions meant to the driver and to his horses.

We started betimes one morning for a visit to a village, which was supposed to be quite a little affair, and not likely to take us more than a day for going and returning. I began very early in my experiences to find out that no reliable information could be obtained about distances, even from people living only a few miles away. We soon left the high road, accompanied by one or two outriders—a necessary precaution, as we always went off with a very distinct feeling that we knew not what might befall us by the way, and anticipations of danger did not lie dormant for want of stories related to us of robberies, murders, and hungry wolves.

After covering a mile or two, we came to a sheet of ice. There was a bank rising on one side and a huge mound of stones on the other. Our horses, accustomed to go over almost anything, dashed across the ice, when a crash was heard, and in we went! The

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frightened little animals endeavoured to rush up the bank, but they could not gain any foothold on the slippery surface, and, fortunately for our limbs, did not succeed, but only sank deeper in the water.

We managed to scramble out of the carriage somehow, and stood on the bank watching our horses unharnessed and the clever manner in which they soon struggled to land. Then the vehicle had to be extricated, and, for that purpose, it was necessary to wait with the hope that some one might pass that way, and give a helping hand. Fortunately we had not to stay very long. A man came by, evidently not having any urgent business on hand. With his aid our carriage was dragged out, and, after being much hindered by all the delay, we started off once more. Before long the harness broke, but a generous young fellow, seeing our difficulty, relieved himself of his leather belt, as if, like the early Christians, these people had everything in common, and our driver speedily repaired the damage. Then we got into bog-land again, "heaven made" roads, as they are called. Certainly they

were never made by man, but I should be sorry to credit heaven with such work. The frost had not been sufficient to harden the ground to any extent, but had been just severe enough to make it very sticky. Our difficulties were growing serious. The horses pulled and scrambled along, and stuck and tried again. Then one fell down, and time was spent in getting him up, for he was under the feet of the other two, and they all had to be cheered and encouraged not to give in altogether. From feelings of compassion I got out. But I was very soon humbled to the dust (or mud) with my vain efforts to walk. Every step brought up pounds of clay, or pulled off my overshoes. These at last I flung away, knowing my boots would remain on as long as my feet did.

After many vain efforts to walk, I had ignominiously to give in, and call to the driver to take me up again, with additional pounds of mud which I could not remove.

At 3.15 p.m., instead of 11 o'clock, we reached the village of Perooshtitye. Of course, to return the same evening was quite out of the question, for we required some

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hours with the people, and one cannot travel safely in such a country in the dark. The poor men and women had been waiting for us for hours, as we had sent word we were coming, and the carts full of our goods had been forwarded on the previous day.

Surrounded by the population, we made our way along the narrow streets, past dilapidated cottages, till we reached a curious old building, half stable, half dwelling-place. We stumbled up the rickety stairs, bent our heads to enter the low aperture, and found ourselves in a kind of rude barn. There, sitting cross-legged on the floor, we found some of our friends, with garments hanging in rags, nursing their infants, and dirty little children gnawing bits of rye bread. A few strong but sad-looking men were there, one or two still having retained their huge sheep-skin coats, which they wore with the wool inside, the outside being a veritable patch-work.

We were soon busy, spreading out our goods in heaps—cloth for skirts, long-cloth shirts, made and unmade, head-kerchiefs, youngans, padded jackets, and shoes. There



were eighty people to be provided with clothing. I had indiscriminately picked out eighty pairs of shoes for men, women, and children, remembering that offspring abounded, and, curiously enough, after allowing every one to select a pair according to size, we had, as an Irishman might say, only one pair over, and they were odd ones.

At 10 o'clock, when we had finished, we went to seek an inn for the night, with the blessings of the people ringing in our ears as we wandered out into the darkness.

Before long we came across a hostel, mounted a few wooden steps, and were shown into a small room with many beds. There was nothing else but a little shaky table, a very cracked looking-glass on the wall for ornament, no use (as you could not see yourself in it), and a stove. We sat on the beds, and speculated upon the prospect of food. We had taken some lunch, and, carefully dividing out the bread and apples into two lots, one for night and one for morning, we turned our attention to my boots. I could not sleep in them, for I should have had to sit dangling my feet in

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the air all night; so I committed the muddy articles to the tender mercies of mine host. He took them down, washed them well in a pail of water, and brought them back dripping. We had a fire lighted in the stove, and put them to dry all night. Then we curled ourselves up on the beds, and waited and watched for the morning, determined to retrace our steps as soon as there was a streak of light in the sky.

We knew full well the anxiety of those whom we had left the day before, though we did not know till our return how truly alarmed they were, and what efforts they had made through the police, the military, and the post-office officials to ascertain what had become of us. Recollections of friends murdered, because known to be carrying money, even on a like errand, heightened their anxiety.

When the morning came, and we made our way down the wooden ladder into the yard, we were greatly cheered by hearing from our driver that he had been informed there was a better road than the one by which we had travelled the previous day.

This seemed quite a possibility, even in Bulgaria, and with thankful hearts at the announcement, we left the little inn just as daylight was breaking over the hills. Eagerly we looked out for the signs of a "better" road. It was certainly another road, if road it deserved to be termed, but the "better" part never came into view.

We struggled with the mud as before, and then things became so bad that we left the track and wandered through ploughed fields, anon returning to the liquid slush, boulders, and stumps of dwarfed oak-bushes, till at last, when the conveyance capsized, we burst out laughing. The dismay and distress of our patient driver was really comical, as he looked round and exclaimed, "My God! what is going to happen next?"

Fortunately we were nearing the end of our journey, and we managed before very long, no one mercifully being hurt, to get into the high cobbled road which led us back to our friends. Considering the wear and tear and time expended upon our journey, it seemed incumbent on me to give my driver, at the end of that expedition, something in

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addition to the bargained price. My gift was evidently a very handsome one in his eyes, for so delighted was he at my generosity that he called his neighbours together in the evening, and told them that, on the following day, they must all go and worship where the English lady went. This they did, adding considerably to the congregation, and I think I raised my countrymen and countrywomen in their estimation from that time forth. After this it was always "heavenly work" to drive us about.

As Christmas day drew near, I determined to make an effort to bring some little brightness into the lives of my poor friends.

I procured a large shrub, though it was not of the orthodox type, but I knew my guests would not be critical, as they had never seen a Christmas-tree before. It stood on the platform of the hall, which was kindly lent us for our sewing-classes, and we placed a hedge of evergreens behind, out of which the tree appeared to be growing. Flags were draped above, the Bulgarian flag and the Union Jack being side by side in the most friendly manner.

In front we spread logs of wood united by branches of evergreens, and in the foreground, toys and sweets, and anything we could lay our hands on out of the small supply at our command in the little town of Bourgas. Coloured candles and bright paper designs added to the effect. These children had never possessed any toys, and the hilarious outburst of approval of their little presents would have satisfied the expectations of the most exacting host. The distribution of gifts had to be somewhat hurriedly got through, for fear of a free fight, owing to the favourite articles—toy-trumpets—not being in the same proportion as the children at my party. There were no more to be bought in the place, and we had a fine scrimmage over them. The only way of stopping the shouts of the boys was to fill their mouths with sweets.

It was certainly a great satisfaction to see the little ones that afternoon like real children, rather than like good, sad, grown-up men and women.

At night we gave a supper to all—men, women, and their families. It was a kind of Passover-meal taken standing—the Eastern

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posture of devotion. Together we repeated "Our Father," and then I said, "*Da vee ye stadko*," the customary Bulgarian expression from a host to the guests (literally, "May it be sweet to you"), after which the bread was broken and dipped into the dish, and the sop was eaten. It was a never-to-be-forgotten sight. These sad-faced men and women, with memories that they hardly dared recall, formed a company most of whom had not partaken of what could be called a meal for many weeks.

As I walked up and down between the tables, and watched the quiet, silent guests, generally so talkative, a solemnity fell over us all for a time, and tears were seen on many a face. Now and again a few sentences fell from their lips: "We have never seen anything like this before;" "We shall never forget this as long as we live."

Then we cleared away the tables, and youths and maidens held hands and began to dance the "*Hora*," all moving round and round in a circle, singing in their weird style whatever came uppermost to their minds. Their wailing voices were accom-

panied by an instrument, which produced a most monotonously dismal sound, and was, in appearance and effect, something like the Highlander's bag-pipe. I had hired it for the occasion, much to the satisfaction of my guests.

Their thoughts were so centred on the Turks and their sufferings through them, that I found all they sang had to do with their past fears. Every song begins and ends with a refrain, and the expressions of feeling that evening were, as far as I could ascertain them, running on such ideas as the following :—

Why art thou sleeping, my wife, my wife?  
Awake, for the Turks are seeking thy life;  
I hear they are robbing the young and the old,  
Turning them out in this terrible cold,  
Tempting young brides to be faithless and bold,  
Traitors to Christ whom we love and uphold.  
Awake, my wife, awake.

After singing for a little while, the memory of the old times, of their flight, of their homeless condition, of their lovers and husbands whom they had left and lost, came over them, and they sobbed as if their hearts would break.





## INTO TURKEY

"Listen, and I will show thee of my heart :  
Christ laid a blessed yoke upon my days  
To follow Him among His poor and sad,  
And I was happy."

*The Disciples.*



## CHAPTER IV

### INTO TURKEY

**W**HEN we had distributed food and clothing to over 14,000 people, we decided to enter Turkey and see if anything could be done for the poor creatures, who, for various reasons, had been left behind during the general exodus. On the 29th December we left Bourgas mantled in deep snow. We were up at 5 a.m., and reached the station at 6. The snow was so deep that we found it quite impossible to walk through it, and had to send off in haste to hire one of the wedding carriages.

It was still dark, and the snow was falling heavily, but the refugees, to whom we had said "Goodbye" on the previous afternoon, braved the weather, and were crowding round the station on our arrival to see us once more.

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Then, when we entered our carriage, they stood all along the line, and one by one they passed our window, kissed our hands, blessed us, and asked us not to forget them. As the Serbs said to another English lady recently returned from the East, "When you go home you must tell the truth about us. It is all we ask of you." They think we cannot know or we should surely keep our promise, and come to their aid.

It was sad to part from these people, some of whom had endeared themselves to me by their dog-like devotion. Tears were in many eyes, and we wondered what the future was going to bring to the simple, affectionate folk. I still treasure a faded "bouquet" given me that morning, consisting of two pieces of ever-green and a spray of single-stock tied up with a bit of string. It was pressed into my hand at parting, as a memento of love and gratitude, and as an expression of longing to give some visible token of their feelings.

The journey was as tedious as most journeys are in the East. No one is in haste—all things move slowly, and it is well to lay in a stock of patience upon which to draw as

required. To enter Turkey for the first time is an experience not easily forgotten, especially when the country is in a somewhat disturbed condition, as it was at that time. Moreover, as the journey was for the express purpose of doing what the Turkish Ambassador had begged Lord Lansdowne to stop, viz., the distribution of relief—the interest, in our case, was quickened, and the risks were intensified. Spies, one was reminded, were in every direction, and particulars of our appearance and doings were noted down, so that when a Turkish passport was supplied on another occasion, it contained a description of our ages, religion, position in society, and general attractiveness or the *reverse*. My companion's age was guessed correctly to a day, and mine was only one year short of the truth.

Impressive warnings were generously administered to us against our being on friendly terms with any Bulgarian. We were advised not to have dealings with the Greeks, never to move without a Turkish escort, and not on any account to enter any of the far-distant villages. This last piece of advice

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was somewhat embarrassing, as it was for that express purpose we were going into Turkey. The variety of the instructions given was quite overwhelming enough to make one tremble at proceeding, and I felt much like a poor invalid embarrassed by the offer from her friends of all imaginable quack and pet medicines, each one guaranteed to insure life against every possible ill. As it happened, we did the very thing we were most warned to avoid, and the caution having been so very emphatic, our action looked like marching to certain destruction. I have always found, through life, that, after seeking Divine guidance, the next thing to do is to use the common sense God gives us, and then to take whatever opening He sends, however strange it may appear, and I have never had to regret acting on that principle.

We reached the Turkish frontier in the late evening, and in the darkness very little could be seen to indicate that we were getting into disturbed regions, till the fact became evident from the appearance of a long row of Turkish soldiers with their guns pointed at us on either side of our train.

We were turned out for the examination of our luggage—a very tedious business, from the thorough way in which it was done. The tea-basket full of tins looked to them a most suspicious bit of luggage. The mystery of the kettle was beyond their power of solution, and though I opened the lid no one dared look within. Gangs of soldiers watched our every movement, and when the examination was completed, they escorted us to a train at some distance from the one in which we had been travelling. Every precaution was taken that nothing should enter Turkish territory that had not been carefully examined by the military. We felt relieved that we had not been called upon to undress, at least partially, as stories were floating about of shoes and stockings being taken off, and garments undone to see if anything lay concealed beneath. We knew that no literature would be allowed us, unless it might be a Bible. No one could read English, and, therefore, they felt it safer to relieve all passengers of every description of printed matter, some of which might contain calumnies on the Turkish Government.

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On entering the train, which was waiting for us, I deemed it advisable to fee the guard, especially as his clothes were in such rags that I thought he, like the soldiers, probably worked for nothing. From that moment he was our devoted slave, looked in upon us constantly, described the glories of the Adrianople hotels, and offered to leave the train and escort us to the best one, three miles from the station. I knew that, whatever happened, we might turn to him for protection. During the remainder of the journey I was entertained by my companion, who had lived in Bulgaria, with stories of how this or that bridge was blown up a short time before; how lives had been lost and trains wrecked; how every boy could make a bomb, and throw it too; and how, at any moment, one such missile might explode to our destruction, and so on, and so on.

Thus we beguiled the time, and amused (?) ourselves to a late hour, when our train slowly steamed and snorted into Adrianople.

The railway stations are always miles away from the town. I tried to discover the secret of this, but did not find any one who could



enlighten me on the subject. We knew that our journey was not fully accomplished, and that we had some distance yet to go before we could settle down for the night, but the critical question was "Where?"

There is no English Consul in Adrianople. There used to be one, but he found it very dull, I was told, and requested to retire. Our Government seems to have offered no resistance, and the post has remained vacant to this day.\* I had written to one Consul hoping I might gain some information about an inn, but he was unwell, I afterwards learnt, and he lived too far off to send his cavass.

We alighted from our carriage somewhat dazed, and very tired, and stood in the midst of the crowd wondering what we had better do. Suddenly a fine-looking Albanian, dressed in the becoming pale grey Bulgarian uniform, stepped up to us and presented me with a letter which, to my great astonishment, was addressed to myself. I broke the seal, and

\* Since writing the above I am thankful to state that on representations made to our Foreign Office a Consul has just been appointed.

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read as follows: "The bearer will take charge of your luggage and will bring you to my house, where accommodation is prepared for you and your companion. Kindly follow him."

This was from the Bulgarian Agent! We looked at each other. What should we do?—refuse such a kind offer, or go?—the one thing above all others we had been warned on no account to do. We followed the man. Our guard was very much upset. The railway and military officials strongly objected. All our luggage had to undergo again a searching examination, and I believe if the functionaries had dared to detain us, they would have done so to spite that Bulgarian uniform. The cavass got us through somehow, though he only just escaped a fight in the station, but we were at last conveyed to a carriage waiting for us. Our luggage was hauled up, crack went the long whip, and off we dashed. The decision to "follow the man" I have never regretted, for the kindness received and the friendships formed remain as one of the brightest memories in connection with my visit to Turkey.

"There are in our existence spots of time  
That with distinct pre-eminence retain  
A renovating virtue."

And in that Eastern home "a renovating virtue" stands out in sad contrast to the surrounding gloom—sad, because of the contrast; bright, because of the virtue. I met a stranger; I found a friend.

No doubt we were suspected of being dangerous confederates with the Bulgarians, for my companion, unfortunately, though half-English, bore a Bulgarian name.

Before going to work, our first duty was to pay our respects to the Pacha, and request permission to relieve the unfortunate sufferers in his Vilayet.

We were received most graciously; coffee and cigars were offered us, and much sympathy with our mission of mercy was expressed. The necessary leave was granted, an escort was promised, and we were much pressed to do what we could for some poor *Turks* "who had been grievously treated by the Bulgarians."

We returned greatly encouraged, though I observed our friends were not as elated as

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we were, for they knew the "tricks and the manners" of the Turks, unrealised by us at that time. On the following morning we made our way to the bazaars, to procure the articles of clothing to be distributed during our approaching journey. It is always interesting to make purchases in Turkey. The shop-keepers are mostly Armenians, the Sultan being obliged to retain a fair number of them in his European dominions, otherwise trade would fail.

We wandered down the narrow, covered streets, followed by our cavass, who promised to introduce us to men of good character who would not cheat us. Various Oriental costumes were to be seen. The Muhamedan women stole along silently, robed from head to foot in their gay-coloured loose and flowing robes, some pink or yellow, black or white; the Albanians in their picturesque, tight-fitting, and much-embroidered cloth clothes; Turks with their scarlet sashes, and conspicuous daggers always ready for use, walked about, and watched us with curious interest. The tradesmen, many of whom were squatting behind their goods, were soon alert,

since business was about to be done, and those whom we favoured were delighted beyond their wildest dreams of catering for the public, when our purchases of jackets, socks, and yourgans ran into some hundreds of articles. Coffee was generally offered, and one sat and talked as if meeting with old friends, and as if time was of no account.

When we had completed our purchases, we returned to our kind host, and spent the next two days in preparing and packing our goods, ordering carts and our carriage, for the journey to Kirk Kilissé. Then we sent word to the Pacha that we were ready to start, and asked that he would kindly fulfil his promise to provide us with the necessary escort, without which we knew we should not be allowed to leave the town. We waited patiently for his reply. At last, word was sent us that the Pacha could not provide us with the escort, but no reason was given for the refusal. We wondered what we had better do. Should we set him at nought, and go without any soldiers? However, that matter was soon settled for us by the arrival of our driver,

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who said that all the cabmen in Adrianople had received strict orders not to convey us out of the town. This made it impossible for us to visit the villages we had intended to help; so, through channels we felt to be safe, we distributed all the clothing we had prepared; then, shaking the dust of that city from off our feet, we passed on to another.

Our next halting-place was Philippopolis, from which town we made many excursions into villages where a considerable number of refugees were located. Our adventures were much the same as on former occasions. The people were chiefly from Macedonia, and they appeared more cowed and less intelligent than our Thracian friends. I retain a clear remembrance of one journey up to the Monastery of St. George, which had been kindly turned into an asylum for the poor homeless creatures who had wandered over the Balkans, and had been invited to the monastery by one of their own priests.

We wound our way up the zigzag track for some time, and as we approached the large gates opening into the courtyard, and

clanged the monastery bell, there greeted us a great barking of fierce dogs which are kept to guard this mountain-home from intruders. The priest soon came forward to give us a welcome. He was a kindly-looking man, dressed in the usual "chimney pot," the brim of which, however, was at the top instead of the bottom, and under which was tucked the long hair that their Church does not permit to be cut. His rusty black robe looked very much the worse for wear, and his hands were the hands of a son of toil.

A long, raised, and deep corridor ran round the building, and on it there soon appeared a crowd of refugees, who stood and silently gazed at us—whether with pleasure or interest it was difficult to say, for a more stolid set of people I never saw. Their clothes were gay with the bright-coloured woollen aprons always worn by the women. Their shirts were beautifully embroidered, but all hung in rags and ribbons. Their faces showed they had been driven and tortured till they looked almost like beings without any souls. It is the custom with these people to wear on their person such coins as they possess—gold and

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silver pieces hanging round their necks and sometimes over their foreheads. They are loath, indeed, to part with these adornments, but I noticed the poor creatures in question had retained hardly a single coin.

The priests had fed them well, but they had no coverings for the cold nights, and our presents of yourgans and cloth and shoes must have been very acceptable. The women's stolidity thawed a little before we left, and afterwards they sent us messages of much gratitude, as if it had only dawned upon them two days later that we had added to their comfort.

Of course we had to visit the church before our departure. It was a poor, rude sort of structure, with no pretensions to architectural beauty, though manifestly of considerable age. From the roof were suspended several massive cut-glass chandeliers. Holy pictures of terrible-looking saints, of the six-a-penny order, hung on the walls. Reading-desks and taper-stands constituted the furniture, and on one lectern lay the velvet-covered Bible which is kissed by each worshipper on entering.



After thanking the kind priest for his attention, for he had allowed us to sit in his guest-room for our lunch, we mounted our vehicle and clattered out of the quadrangle, the dogs rushing after us to give us their inhospitable farewell.

Soon after this time it became necessary for me to return to England, and I could do so with the comfortable feeling that the people had, at all events for the present, been provided with what they absolutely needed.

It is always impossible to prophesy what may happen in Turkey. Rebellion was in the air; statements were made, in every direction and in a most authoritative manner, that a fresh rising would take place in the early summer.

With almost breathless anxiety those who were interested in these simple, rough, uncivilised, but long-suffering Christians under Ottoman rule, watched the movements, on the one hand, of those in power, and on the other, of the eager, restless, and desperate insurgent leaders.

Every day the newspapers were opened

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with the expectation of seeing an account of a rising, followed by the usual massacres, and a sense of relief and thankfulness followed as week after week passed and no fresh disturbances arose.

## THE PEOPLE

"Frugal, affectionate, sober and withal  
Keenly industrious."

WORDSWORTH.

"The Bulgarian is not devoid of those unobtrusive household virtues which enrich the State, and keep at a distance the sin and the pauperism which are the cancers of the more crowded communities of Europe."

A. A. PATON.



## CHAPTER V

### THE PEOPLE

**T**HE people with whom, and for whom, I worked are Bulgars. To speak of Macedonians is to talk loosely and incorrectly. Macedonia is inhabited by Turks, Greeks, Albanians, Roumans, Jews and Bulgars.

It seems to have been ascertained, by those who have carefully gone into the question, that, without doubt, the Bulgar element far preponderates, and that the number of Bulgar villages exceeds all others. Mr. Evans, in his interesting and instructive pamphlet on Macedonia, writes on this subject as follows:—

“The fact is that even in this country—largely owing to interested efforts to disguise the true situation—the great preponderance

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of the Bulgar element in Macedonia is only imperfectly realised. I can only say, as my personal experience after exploring almost the whole interior of the province, that outside the fringe already referred to and some small urban centres, practically the whole mass of the population is Slavonic, speaking characteristically Bulgarian dialects. The Bulgarian shibboleths, such as the placing of the article after the word, extend even to the Uskub region, sometimes claimed by the Serbs, whose real speech only begins north of the Shar range. Where, as in certain small towns such as Kastoria, the Greek element was in a majority, it was far outweighed by the populous Bulgar villages around. This great preponderance of the Bulgar element is a fundamental factor in the present situation which has been much obscured by statistics drawn from Greek sources. It is liable to be very imperfectly realised by foreigners and even by Consuls whose experience of Macedonia has been mainly confined to towns like Salonica and Monastir."

The inhabitants, again, in the Adrianople

district are mostly Bulgars, and speak the same language as the Bulgarians.

Visiting the people as I did, watching them day by day during their exile, coming into close contact with them through our sewing-class, and subsequently seeing them in their own homes, it was possible to gather up details that go far to make a picture of the home life as lived under Turkish rule.

Between us and our "Olden Times" there lies a mystery which no amount of history can clear—a gulf which cannot be bridged—so difficult is it to call up the past, in which circumstances and surroundings were totally different from anything we know to-day; but I felt, when living in those Bulgarian villages, and watching the simple primitive life of the people, that I was carried back, through centuries of time, to many of the habits and customs of our own nation in days long past.

These Bulgars are very energetic, strongly built, hardy, truthful, practical, shrewd, persevering, and independent. Agriculture seems to be their favourite pursuit, and their ablest men throughout their history have sprung from the peasantry.

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Both men and women early become bronzed through their outdoor life in the continuous sunshine, and their dark complexion shows in strange contrast to their very pearly and beautiful teeth. The women's hair, always covered with a white or coloured handkerchief, grows most luxuriantly, and hangs down behind in two long plaits. A bright glow of colour is generally seen in the girls' cheeks, and up to the age of twenty they are often very pretty. The houses are built of wood and mud, with deep eaves to keep off the hot sun. The roofs are heavily laden with thick tiles, and each house has a peculiarity quite its own. A wooden gallery runs round two sides of the dwelling, and as the chalets are often built on the slope of a hill and placed quite irregularly, the general effect is very picturesque. Not infrequently the lower part of the building is devoted to stabling purposes, and one mounts to the upper domestic regions by means of a rude ladder. Their abodes possess historic interest, handed down from generation to generation. They often possess rough carvings, quaint niches in the walls orna-



mented in primitive fashion, and standing as memorials of some skilled ancestor of whom the family speak with pride.

Every house contains a loom, every woman knows how to weave, and there seems to exist no such rivalry as led England, in the sixteenth century, to pass the Weavers' Act, forbidding any dwelling to contain two looms.

Travelling is difficult, and has mostly to be done on foot, for the paths winding round the mountains are rough and narrow. But, when carrying wood or corn for themselves or for the Turks, the ox-waggon take the most wonderful journeys.

The country is very fertile: the rivers abound in fish: the pasturage is rich, and the forests are numerous. For fifteen centuries the naturally peaceful, and certainly industrious, population have tilled their soil, and I was informed by a gentleman who had lived in the country many years that, if they were unmolested by the Turks, they would be some of the happiest and most contented people on the face of the earth.

The temperature varies extremely according to the position of the villages. High up

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on the hills it is excessively cold in the winter, and the snow lies long on the mountains. In the valleys it is warmer, and even during the cold months the weather is delightful from the amount of sunshine that prevails.

When rumours occur that the soldiers are on the march to a village, the careful housewife gathers together the household valuables, hides them under ground, or removes them to the house of a friend, and awaits, behind the closely barred windows, what may come, knowing only too well how, ere long, the streets may run with blood.

Close and friendly intercourse exists between neighbour and neighbour, and love is often strong. Hatred also is of an intense nature where enmity exists. The general character of the people is melancholy, from the long oppression under which they have existed.

Their amusements are chiefly confined to singing, to the village gossip, and the narrow limits of friendship, such as they find in their near surroundings.

The love of their country is of the nature of that passionate love which comes from

knowing no other. Their living, their homes, their interests, their hopes, are all centred in the village where they were born. "Is your Vilayet where you live," said a young girl to me, "as beautiful as ours?"

Very wonderful is their power of endurance. I shall never forget watching three young men who had travelled over the frontier on foot, after having been most cruelly treated by some Turkish soldiers who had slashed them about over head and arms. These men appeared at the hospital, and I was sent for to see their wounds dressed. It was plain, from their set teeth and the determined look on their faces, that they were not going to flinch from pain, and they all walked back to their beds, when the operation was over, as if little was the matter with them. Though so poor, these people are remarkably hospitable. Anything they possess in the way of food they are willing to offer to their guests, and nothing was more pathetic, on my last visit, than the eagerness they manifested to prove their gratitude for help rendered. Sometimes their earnestness took a form almost painful in its sacrifice. One

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young girl, who was in consumption, had received a present of a chicken which she had petted and loved, and lived with. On my arrival she, remembering what had been done for them during the preceding winter, had her loved chicken killed, and then she folded it in a cloth, and brought it to me as an offering. Poor child! What could I do but accept it gratefully, though my heart was sad at the thought of having deprived her of her playmate. One could not but be touched with such marks of affection, and they were not rare.

I had no difficulty in gaining obedience to rules which we had to make for our sewing-class. During the first week or two after our arrival, the women came to me all day long on Sundays about their various requirements, and as we were working hard, often having to be up very early, and frequently getting disturbed nights, we soon found it absolutely necessary to secure *some* rest one day in the week. I explained this to them, and from that time no one intruded on my privacy during the hours of Sunday. Now and again there was a delicacy of

perception that impressed me. With all our complicated civilisation, we have often to search in vain for such touches of nature, as I came across in these children of the hills.

The affections of the people are deep, and family-life is sweet, nothing being more delightful to them than for relations and friends to gather round their huge log-fires, and there, sitting on the floor, to talk to their hearts' content, while the women spin their bobbins as they draw the wool from a bundle attached to a long stick held under the arm. The younger girls, now and again, give expression, in impromptu songs, to some thought which comes uppermost in their minds.

The following story will illustrate their clinging and affectionate nature, and their readiness to sacrifice their lives for their dearest ones. There had been a skirmish between the Turks and some insurgents near Racovo-Bouff. The villagers fled in terror, and among them was a young widow, Maria Traïkora, whose husband had just been killed. She was hurrying forward to join her sister, who had escaped with her only child Gueorgui, five years of age. As she climbed the hill,

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she saw that the village which lay behind her was in flames, and on reaching her sister, found to her dismay that the child was missing. Weary of remaining the whole day with his aunt, he had made his escape, and had gone back to find his mother. The thought that her child might be in the burning village made the poor woman desperate. She immediately retraced her steps, and, in the midst of a hail of bullets, went back to the scene of terror. In every direction she found her way blocked by fire. As she paused for a moment in her agony, she heard the despairing cries of a child; she rushed in the direction of the voice, and, at the corner of a street, saw her boy, shouting for his mother. In a moment she was by his side; she seized him in her arms, and covered him with her kisses. In her joy she forgot, for a moment, that the soldiers were close at hand. As she tried to make her escape, they surrounded her, snatched her child from her arms, cut him to pieces, and then put an end to her life. The remains of both were found two days later, and reverently laid in the ground.

I met with a charming collection of

Roumanian folk-songs, expressing in the most vivid manner the undercurrent of the lives of the people as seen in Thrace, and I cannot refrain from lifting the veil of one past sorrow and revealing the depth of devotion in a bereaved woman for her dearest who was dead.

“If a knock sounded on my door at even,  
First I should think that it was him returning,  
But soon I should remember he was dead,  
And know it was his dear soul home returning;  
Then should I bid it enter at the door,  
And come close, close beside me,  
And his dear soul would ask me,  
‘The children, and the maize-fields, and the cattle,  
How fare they all?’  
And I would answer his dear soul, ‘All well,’  
That it might rest and fall asleep in peace.  
Yet would I not that his dear soul should ask me,  
‘How fares it with the sorrow of thy soul?’  
For since unto the dead one may not lie,  
I must perforce give answer, ‘Tis not healed.’  
Then his dear soul  
Never again could fall asleep in peace.  
Moreover, his dear soul will surely ask  
For flowers of me, and I will give it flowers;  
Yet would I not, it asked me for a drink,  
For one can give the dead no drink save tears,  
And I would not that it should perceive that these  
Were tears of mine.  
Then his dear soul  
Were fain to see our children, and the house,

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To know if all were yet unchanged, and I  
Would show him house and children, for they all  
Are yet unchanged.  
Yet would I not that his dear soul should ask me  
To show my face—quick-sighted are the dead,  
And he would see my face all drawn with sorrow.  
Ah, no! for when upon the door at even  
His dear soul knocketh,  
I must be able thus to answer him :  
‘All here within goes well—yea, in my heart,  
And on my face ;  
I have forgotten thee—go hence and sleep  
In peace again ’—for ne’er the dead must weep—  
‘All here goes well.’  
Then his dear soul would wend its way again  
Back to the grave, nor turn to look behind ;  
And never more would his dear soul arise  
To knock upon my door at eventide.”

As I write these words I am carried back in imagination to a large, low-roofed cottage. The mud floor was clean enough to sit upon ; a heap of logs blazed away in the open fireplace, and by my side sat a poor woman with her head upon my knee, telling me of her passionate love for the one she had lost. But her sorrow was not a selfish one ; it was not for her own loneliness or desolation ; it was all for the good of her beloved. After a time, when I and my friend had been talking to her of the future life, and of the tender love of



our heavenly Father, she simply said, "Oh! if I could think as you do, how happy I should be!"

There is wanting in the teaching of their religious instructors that faith in God's love which alone can help us in such times of distress. They have not learned to say—

"Alone unto our Father's will  
One thought hath reconciled—  
That He whose love exceedeth ours  
Hath taken home His child."

It is pathetic to see the hold their priests gain over the women through their passionate longing that their loved ones, when taken from earth, may be at peace. In order to ensure the happiness of the departed, these poor people are instructed to pay for prayers to be said to deliver their relatives from torment. On this system the Establishment thrives financially. I found a sorrowful woman whose daughter had died of consumption, through want and exposure. The girl had been exceedingly industrious, had woven carpets, cloth, and many useful household requisites. Every one of these articles

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had to be sold after her death, that money might be given for prayers to be offered on her behalf, and the poor mother, moreover, to the same end, deprived herself of every covering of the above kind she possessed.

The people are deeply religious; faith comes without question, and the routine of their "orthodox" ceremonial is zealously followed.

We cannot but admire the tenacity with which they have adhered to their religion when almost everything was to be gained by renouncing it.

They have had scanty training; yet God's name is often on their lips. They know Him chiefly through the superstitions of their Greek Church, and yet I found in them a depth of spiritual life that I could hardly have believed possible.

At the close of our sewing-classes we always had a short time of devotion. It seemed to me that, with our very varied experiences and differing forms of religion, we could best unite in worship on a basis of silence, and each day, before we separated, we were quiet before the Lord, obeying the Scripture injunction, "Be still, and know that I am God."

"There, syllabled by silence, we could hear  
The still, small voice that reached the Prophet's ear."

In that deep quietness, that sense of holy awe that fell upon us, we knew we were in the presence of God, and never have I been in a company where the feeling of devotion was more solemn or impressive. Tears followed as thoughts arose of past and present suffering, and yet more than one ventured to declare, in trembling speech, "God is good."

In after-days they said to me, "We learned to pray." One almost marvels that their trust in, and reverence for, the Divine goodness have not been shaken, but they are not philosophers. They muse and dream, not often of a happy life, but rather of sacrifice, suffering, and martyrdom.

In the early years of the Bulgarian Empire there arose a priest named Bogomile, "the beloved of God," a mystical writer, who exercised for a time an extraordinary influence over the people. His doctrine of a good and evil Deity corresponded with the Slavonic myth of good and evil spirits, called *bogy* and *bésy*. Bogomile forbade the worship of all images and pictures as being idolatrous.

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His followers styled themselves "the salt of the earth," "the lights of the world." They had no pre-arranged service; any member in the "upper grade" might preach, and elders were appointed by the congregation. No churches were needed, for the people worshipped wherever they could gather. All war was prohibited, and capital punishment also, both being regarded as works of the evil spirit. Through persecution this teaching spread. But the "heresy" divided the Christians, and under the Greek supremacy the sect seems to have died out. I have mentioned this because I detected with much interest, almost as if the spirit of Bogomile still lingered over their horizon, a hidden readiness to respond to a simpler method of worship than that which they are trained to follow. Their natural independence had led them to break away from the Greek Patriarch, for they object to say their prayers like parrots, in a language they do not understand, and they have also insisted on greater purity in the lives of their priests and bishops. After much agitation the Bulgarian Exarchate was created, and the Exarch ap-

pointed as head of the Church in 1870, when he was promptly excommunicated with all his followers by the Greek Patriarch.

Marriage is the secret hope of every young girl, and the preparation for her trousseau begins as soon as she can weave or sew.

It is a pretty sight to watch the dexterous manner in which she will draw the flax out and wind it on the spindle, as she sings of the hazel-wood and the mountains, of the fountain, and the one whom she may meet there. "I never told the wind," she sings, "I loved him well—And yet I love so well."

To keep herself pure for her loved one is all her thought, and perhaps the most terrible drop of bitterness in the lives of these peasants arises from the constant effort of the Turkish soldiers to enter, by force, the homes of bright young girls in order to rob them of their maidenhood.

Who could listen unmoved to this wail of the ravished one who sings?—

"Four weeks it is, O sister, that not a single rain-  
drop  
Has fallen on our meadows, and for four weeks I  
weep.

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Yes, I—who with my laughter could make those  
  laugh that wept—  
The blessed air of heaven can find me out no longer,  
  Since sin has shut the door.  
And they, whom once I cherished, all tell me now,  
  ‘We leave thee  
  Here with thy sin alone.’  
The maidens spurn me—‘We are pure,’ they say.  
The stars are all ashamed to look at me;  
Our crops are long forsaken of the rain;  
He whom I loved, upbraids me that I loved him,  
And fearfully his glance avoideth mine;  
  When at the sight of me the maidens redden,  
  He reddens too—my shame makes him ashamed. . . .  
Joy can cross my threshold no more,  
Since sin hath crossed it, and shut the door.”

It is no fancy that these poor girls are thus treated. I had many opportunities of finding out, from different sources, the chronic fear in which the young women live. A cautious instinct keeps them from being outspoken till they are sure they can trust the one who goes to them as a friend. When confidence is secured, they pour out their hearts' secrets. There was no need to question the truthfulness of the facts related. It was all so realistic, and the condition of nervous excitement appealed to one more profoundly than any words could do.

When we read in one of our Blue Books that a most trusted Consul sends the following statement home, we know we are dealing with facts, not the excited imagination of sympathetic women :—

“It is evident that the policy of the Turkish Government is to treat the Bulgarians of Macedonia as they treated the Armenians, with the same intention of exterminating them,” and he goes on to speak of one instance in which Bashi-bazouks were let loose on a village, which they sacked and burned, leaving only four houses standing out of 500. “More than 2,000 of the inhabitants had sought refuge in the forest, where many were shot down, and of those who, for various reasons, had remained in the village, 21 elderly men and 60 or 70 women and children were cut to pieces, and 40 *young women were carried off to the Mussulman villages, where they were kept for a week.*”





## THROUGH MACEDONIA

"Oh, speed the moment on  
When wrong shall cease, and Liberty and Love  
And Truth and Right throughout the earth be known  
As in their home above."

WHITTIER.



## CHAPTER VI

### THROUGH MACEDONIA

**D**URING the month of May rumours reached me that the Bulgarian Government did not intend to retain the Christian refugees any longer in their country. For nine months, and more, bread and shelter had been provided for the people, and it was felt to be impossible to continue this relief for so large a number of persons, who ought, by that time, to be independent, and back again in their own country. Consequently they were driven to return to their ruined villages, to their cruel taskmasters, and to the uncertainty they dreaded.

It was impossible not to be deeply moved at the thought of their pitiable condition, knowing as I did how many of them had

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said, "We cannot return; the life is too terrible."

It seemed to me that the right thing to do was to go out again as quickly as possible, with some funds still in hand, and endeavour to express, once more, the love and pity and sympathy of those who had contributed to the relief work.

By helping the people with some money, for they were absolutely without funds, and thus giving them a fresh start in life, we should, I felt, put new courage into their naturally brave hearts.

Of course, there was the danger of the money being stolen from them, but every enterprise involves some risk, and "nothing venture, nothing have," held good in so far as their having nothing if I did not venture, and the possibility of their having something if I did.

On May 24th I started off again, crossed to Ostend, and, in order to save time, I took the Orient express right through to Sofia.

In the fresh early summer everything looked at its best. We went flying past the fields bordered by poplars, beeches, and oaks

in bright spring foliage, past the innumerable wild flowers in their radiant glory. Pretty groups of women and their children were to be seen working in the fields or playing at their cottage doors. Men paused to watch the flying express, or to hold in their frightened horses, which pulled in all directions to get away from the steaming monster.

We sped past Verviers and Cologne, then down to Coblenz, and on to Nuremberg, Munich, and Salzburg, to Vienna. Here we rested for an hour, and then proceeded on our way to Servia. Its capital, Belgrade, is most beautifully situated, and the scenery all along the line, winding in and out of the river Morava, fascinated me. The cottages all looked neat and trim, the pastures rich, the people healthy, and the general appearance was that of prosperity, though that is far from being the actual condition of affairs.

At length we reached Sofia, and here I remained a few days, to try and grasp the situation, and find out where the greatest need existed. This was no easy matter, for there were conflicting interests in the city. Some suggested my going in one direction,

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some another, the one party wishing me to help the Macedonians who had already returned, the other urging me to go into Thrace, in order to induce the refugees from that district, who still hung back in Bulgaria, to return home, and so relieve the country of their presence, and their cost.

I felt that those who had already ventured back were in the most needy condition, and I, therefore, decided to proceed at once into Macedonia. No particulars could be ascertained in Sofia as to the position of the villages to be visited, or arrangements made for the journey; so it became necessary to travel down to Salonica for information and authority to do my work. My former young companion joined me again at Sofia, and together we were sent off in true Bulgarian style. Some of the leading insurgents called to see me and to give me their blessing for the interest I was taking in their people. They were strong, rough, desperate-looking fellows, but their hearts were tender for their home-folk, and the way they thanked me was most touching.

Quite a little company gathered at the

railway station to wish us "God speed," as is the custom with these warm-hearted Bulgars. I was presented with a bouquet tied up with the national colours, red, white and green, and an orphan lad, who had been at our Christmas party, stepped forward, and like a little courtier handed me the flowers, at the same time kissing my hand.

From Sofia we had to travel to Nisch, in order to take the train from there down to Salonica. The country is very beautiful along the banks of the river Nishava, which, according to the old frontier, divided Serbia from Turkey, and there are still a few traces of the hand of the Turk in the graceful minaret towers to be seen now and again on the journey. Travellers are always turned out at Nisch about eleven o'clock at night, both on the outward and the returning journey. One would think the railway company must get a percentage from the cabdrivers for every passenger dumped down in the middle of the night, to be called for five hours after, it being one of the rules of the company that no one should remain in the station during that time. There was a very nice waiting-room, with

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tempting seats, and I used all the powers of persuasion at my disposal to induce the officials to allow us to occupy the seats for the few hours we had to wait. But their hearts were as hard as the nether millstone, and nothing would do but we must be handed over to the cabdrivers. We had to hire an open vehicle, and commit ourselves to the mercy of the Jehu to take us where he would. Out into the open country we went, and the darkness made it impossible to know where we were going. A sleepy guard in his sentry-box took no notice of us as we dashed over a low bridge. Not another individual was to be seen, and after travelling between two and three miles, we pulled up at an inn, and arranged for the conveyance to call for us in three hours' time.

By the dim light of one dirty oil lamp we found ourselves in a large barn-like sort of place, with chairs and tables at which two men were sitting, apparently asleep. A billiard-table served as a bed for the waiter. He jumped up and offered to show us a bedroom. We groped our way along a dark passage, stumbled over some wooden steps, and then walked into a dreary room with two beds, a



table, one chair, and nothing more. He fetched a light, asked if we required anything further, and on receiving an answer in the negative, left us.

By the light of the candle, sufficient to show us the torn blind and unattractive bed-covering, we watched the time, fearful lest we should fall asleep, and be too late for our return journey. We need not have been anxious, for, an hour before the time named, the youth returned and bade us get up, as the carriage was at the door. On returning to the barn we still had to wait. "Would we take anything in the way of refreshment?" "No, we did not feel hungry"—happily, for the smell of stale smoke and I know not what, was more than enough to destroy all appetite.

Our dreary drive was again accomplished, and at 4 a.m. we reached Nisch station *en route* for Salonica. Nisch has no pleasant associations for me. On another occasion we had a rare contest there with the railway authorities over our luggage. The ticket for it had been kept back, and no amount of explanation would induce the officials to believe the fault lay with them.

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All we could get out of them was, "Show us the man who took your ticket." This being an impossibility, the man having spirited himself away, we were left with the alternative of going on minus our luggage, or sitting on it till the next night, with no great prospect of having gained anything through that tedious process. My companion was very urgent that we should leave our boxes behind, not desiring another experience of the Nisch Inn ; so I gave in.

With, I must own, considerable reluctance, I bade adieu to my goods, got into the train, and we proceeded on our way.

On arriving at our destination, we set all the Consuls we could find to bring their authority to bear on the railway officials for the recovery of our luggage. In four days' time my lost boxes arrived. They had been broken open, the hinges and lock had been taken off, and in a very thorough manner the contents had been examined and repacked. The Turkish ideas of packing were original, so that I found my best bonnet rolled up tightly in my soiled linen, and the only thing I could discover that had been left untouched was a small

Christmas pudding, which one of my kind relatives had sent out on hearing that we were living more or less on beans. That memorable pudding was evidently looked upon as a possible bomb, and was allowed a wide berth in consequence. As a *finale*, a considerable sum of money was exacted for the attentions paid to my luggage.

We had taken the precaution—and a very wise one it proved—to carry no literature with us, but, as we were leaving Bulgaria, a newspaper, kindly forwarded by a friend, had reached me, and without any thought beyond the natural desire to know how it fared with my country, I slipped the paper into my hand-bag. When crossing the frontier and entering Turkey it was discovered and carried off. Soon we were sent for. The paper had been spread out before a number of men, none of whom understood a word of English, and very solemnly they were regarding it. We were examined as to the contents, but, not having read any of the news, we could not give any satisfactory answer. The train was kept waiting a considerable time, in perplexity as to what had better be done with

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us and with our paper. At length the interest waned. The little station bell tinkled, and as we were about to start, the suspected journal was handed to me.

When I came to read it I found a paragraph about Turkish misrule that would certainly have caused our further detention, had it been understood, and we might have experienced considerable trouble on account of it.

We reached Salonica late at night, and drove round the beautiful bay, gay with a multitude of vessels dancing on the rippling water, which reflected their lights in long, waving lines of beauty. The city is surrounded by cypresses and other evergreens, and from the water presents a picturesque appearance. The streets are full of life and colour—Greeks, Albanians, Bulgars, Turks, French, and English, jostling against one another on the quay and in the streets, make a gay picture. The cavasses of the different ambassadors and consuls add much to the charm of colour. Some are dressed in tightly-fitting striped knee-breeches; some in full white skirts like ballet-dancers. All wind

round their waists a broad, coloured sash, full of silver-mounted weapons, often heavily jewelled. The cloth zouave jacket is elaborately braided, and the closely-fitting cap bears, in gilt device, the sign of the nationality to which the man's master belongs.

Weary with our long journey and our Nisch experiences, we were glad to reach a comfortable hotel. I was not too tired, however, to read and be amused at the instructions printed and framed in my bedroom, telling me how I was to comport myself during the few days I remained in Salonica.

I was on no account to discuss politics with any one who might call, or even with my own companion. I was not to walk about the hotel in the evening in my *chemise de nuit*; I was not to make any tea for myself or my friends; and a few other regulations followed which I have now forgotten, but all were rigidly adhered to, and we left with untarnished reputation.

Our days in Salonica were taken up with interviews and arrangements for the eventful journey through Macedonia on horseback.

Our good Consul was most helpful in gain-

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ing all we desired in the way of information from the Vali, and in procuring us an escort and letters of introduction to the village authorities, in order that they might render us any assistance we required.

We spent the Sunday at Serres, and from there made our way to Drama. From Drama we moved on to Nevrokop, and as we entered the little town, making a great commotion by our cavalcade, we were stopped to receive a message from a member of the *gendarmerie*, saying that a regiment of soldiers had arrived, and there was no room for us in the inn. Would we, therefore, accept the hospitality he was pleased to offer us? We were very grateful for his kindness, and followed the messenger to his quarters. We found an officer of some distinction in the French army "cabined and confined" in a primitive wooden chalet, his man-servant alone giving any indication of the social position to which his master was evidently accustomed. The ground floor was a stable or shed. We ascended a ladder, and found our host waiting to receive us. The rooms were almost bare. He turned out of his own bedroom for us, and

slept on a low window-shelf during our stay there. In every possible way he endeavoured to give us of his best, and, in response, we listened to his tales of woe and grievances. He wanted to have his wife and sweet child with him, a very natural desire, but as he said—How could he bring them to *such* a place? He had left a position of importance to be hidden away in a dirty little town, with no authority to do anything. If he tried to help one party, another was down upon him; if he listened to any complaints, complaint was made against him. "It was intolerable, it was useless; he was sacrificing himself for nothing." We felt sorry for him, and "Reforms" did not promise any very radical change from the point of view obtained in Nevrokop.

The village of Baldevo was visited during our sojourn in Nevrokop; but, as it lay in the vicinity of a little town, the destitution was not so great as in some of the remoter places to which we went.

After this the more perilous part of our expedition began. We started, with two or three officers leading the way, followed by

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the Head of the police. Then came our horses, on which we were seated astride. This mode of riding is advisable, indeed almost necessary, for owing to the narrowness of the mountain tracks, a carefully balanced weight is obligatory, if one does not want to find oneself at the bottom of a precipice. Quite a company of men, mounted or on foot, brought up the rear. Behind us, or by my side if the path happened to be wide enough, came our cavass. He was an Albanian, and expressed himself as highly pleased when I engaged him, for an English lady had so won his admiration the previous year, that he consequently thought all English ladies must be delightful. Fierce by nature, these Albanians defy the Turkish rule, by refusing to pay any taxes, and as they are useful to the Government in their hatred of the Christians, their other offences are overlooked. At the same time, our Hassan was as attentive and gentle as any woman could be, and was as "honest as the day." I trusted him with a considerable portion of the money which we were about to distribute, as it was no easy matter to carry many hun-



dreds of pounds in gold on our persons. I never found him anything but honourable in his dealings with me, and I was quite sorry when the time came for us to part.

Hassan told me with great pride that *he* was "Christian," and when we endeavoured to ascertain wherein his Christianity consisted, we found he had attended a Protestant meeting in Salonica. That settled the matter in his estimation, and as he behaved much more like a Christian than many thus labelled, I allowed him to cherish his own views on the point. He was courteous in his bearing, and little escaped his quick, keen eyes. Once I saw him roused, and then I felt I should be sorry to be his enemy.

Nothing could exceed the attention of our escort when the mountain-pass was dangerous and the track exceedingly narrow. While wading through one of the deep streams, after a blinding tropical storm, I am sure we should have been swept away but for our good escort, who held us up on either side, and dragged our little horses through the water when they lost their foothold.

The country is charming in the early summer.

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The valleys were green with the crisp fresh grass of the meadows, and the wild flowers profusely covered the sloping hills with patches of yellow, purple, and scarlet. The grey and blue majestic crags, shading off into deeper hues in the shadows, were succeeded, in the distance, by the endless mountains, with their snowy peaks glittering as they stood out against the unclouded blue sky. They stretched out before our eyes day by day, and, as we climbed the mountain-paths from ledge to ledge, only to descend again on the other side, we were greeted by a panorama of beauty such as I think I had never before beheld. In those days no flocks or herds were to be seen led out to pasture ; no sweet-toned bell was to be heard as the cows returned to their villages ; no labourers were visible in the fields. All was quiet, and while, on the one hand, the remembrance of the recent struggle and flight of the people from their ruined villages weighed on our minds, on the other, we thought of those who had hindered the valleys from being " covered over with corn ; " who had turned the meadows into battle-fields bedewed with the blood of inno-

cent women and children, and who had coloured the horizon with the flames of once happy homesteads. "Great England of the Iron-heart now, not of the Lion-heart"—you could have sown those fields with corn, and made the hills resound with the laughter of the children's voices! You could have saved those ruined villages and the lives of those persecuted peasants! You could have done all this, and more, *but*—"you would not."

We had a map of our journey drawn out for us, showing the paths we should take in order to reach the most inaccessible villages, for we felt these would be the ones in greatest need. Our plan was to visit one village each day, distribute our money, remain there for the night, and go on again the following morning. We always started quite early, almost before the sun was up, so as to enjoy the coolest time of day for travelling. We rode till about eleven o'clock, and then, by the side of some stream, we dismounted for our midday meal. This consisted of tea, the country black bread, as long as it lasted, and biscuits. After resting ourselves and our horses, we continued

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our pilgrimage, and generally reached the village to which we were bound by about four o'clock in the afternoon.

One day, after a ten hours' ride, exhausted with the heat and the weight of the money on our persons, and with the continued effort of gripping the saddle as we ascended and descended the mountain sides, scrambling over rocks, and slipping along loose sand, we suddenly came in view of the village of Cremen.

Surrounded by richly wooded hills, with a stream running in and out through the valley, lay the ruins of what must have been a most picturesque hamlet.

As we slowly made our way down the hill, we could see no sign of life anywhere. Nothing but ruins lay in the hollow. We stumbled over huge heaps of tiles and wood of the former houses, so scattered over the road that we were obliged to dismount in order to make our way over the *débris*. At last we stopped and looked round. Where were the people we had come to relieve? Out of the three or four hundred houses formerly standing, only one remained with a roof to

cover it. One of our company shouted into the air that we were there to help the returned exiles, and wished to meet with them at once. Slowly they came, but where exactly they had hidden themselves I could not discover. In about half an hour we were surrounded by a thousand people—men women, and children.

They soon recognised us with great joy as the friends who had provided them with food and clothing during the previous winter.

What a sight it was! Families without a home or semblance of a home, possessing only the garments in which they stood. But how eager they were for the money we had brought them! For, as they said afterwards, "We had nothing wherewith to purchase any tools, and how could we build without tools?"

For the next four or five hours we went over the names of each family. This was rather a tedious business, as they were not sure which name we required. They always appear to have a few to conjure with—their own, their father's, or their husband's. We succeeded eventually in finding a name to

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correspond in each case with our list, and according to the number of children in every family, we provided such a sum as we deemed necessary to enable them to make a fresh start in life.

We had to give up work at 10 p.m., and consider where we were going to spend the night. Our inclinations were toward the fields, but to bivouac there was considered very dangerous, and the Turks who had charge of us were very insistent that we must sleep in the one house still standing. We did not wish to make them unhappy, and gave in.

The house consisted of four rooms with mud walls, mud floor, and ceiling. It contained no furniture of any description whatever. There was a rough door to our room, and a tiny window protected by thick iron bars. We retired for the night, and the men lay scattered about elsewhere. Our faithful Hassan, after delivering up to me all the money he carried on his person for us, planted himself outside our door, and I verily believe that, had any miscreants dared to try and rob us, they would have had to

pass over his dead body before they could have gained an entrance.

We spread a shawl on the uneven mud floor, being compelled to lie down on it, as there was nothing against which we could lean, and to sit up cross-legged, as the peasants do, is a most fatiguing operation for those who are not "to the manner born." We hoped that our fatigue would compel sweet sleep, but that boon was denied us, and we watched eagerly "as those who wait for the morning" to see the first faint streak of dawn. The memory of some of those never-to-be-forgotten nights lingers with me, and I feel thankful that our criminals in England do not have to suffer some of the horrors of our experiences.

We were, indeed, thankful when we could rise and prepare for the continuation of our journey. The establishment possessed one utensil, a tin basin, which had to do duty for divers purposes. Out of it we drank milk, out of it we washed ourselves, and it was then handed round to the company generally, for any use they liked to make of it.

The people kindly brought us a few eggs in

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the morning, for which we were thankful, as our enthusiasm did not rise to making any tea ; so, after swallowing a raw egg each, we went out to find our horses, the men and women almost carrying us over the bricks and stones in their eager desire to serve us.

When we had mounted, they brought us more eggs, little thinking how impossible it was to carry such fragile things on one's lap, when sitting astride a horse and travelling up and down mountain paths !

We were grieved to disappoint our good friends by declining their present, but, not having many changes of raiment with us, we were disinclined to waste the precious eggs over our already not too beautiful garments. Their blessings, however, lingered in our ears long after we had parted, and the memory of their tears and kisses, and how they wrung my hands, abides with me. I shall never forget those solemn faces, or those desolate ruins of Cremen and the cries of farewell, as many ran after us to catch the last sight of our retreating figures before we disappeared among the hills.

Five hours later we alighted from our



saddles for our midday meal, by the side of a charming little stream. A waterfall broke the surrounding silence as the stream hurried along over the boulders at our feet. A thick clump of trees standing in the background shaded us from the sun, and formed a good shelter for our weary little steeds. A rustic bridge arched the rivulet, which ran to a water-wheel, used in former days for grinding corn. Huge rocks towered up not far from us, and beyond them, and between the sloping crags, we could see the more distant mountains in their soft colouring and indescribable beauty.

“ Wild and sweet the flowers were blowing  
By that streamlet's side,  
And a greener verdure showing  
Where its waters glide.  
Down the hill-slope murmuring on  
Over root and mossy stone.”

The picture is photographed on my mind. The peacefulness, and the near sense of God as revealing Himself in the works of His hands untouched by man, brought home afresh the longing that His children of the hills might be permitted to enjoy their rightful heritage undisturbed.

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When John Ruskin was in much such a scene one day in Switzerland, and had been drinking from a spring, as we had done, he heard a voice behind him saying, "Celui qui boira de cette eau-ci aura encore soif, mais celui qui boira de l'eau que je lui donnerai, n'aura jamais soif." It was a mountain-peasant expressing his faith in these old familiar words, and I felt it was the same faith held by these other hill-peasants that enabled them, when the test came—"Mu-hamed or Christ"—to lay down their lives for His sake, rather than deny Him. "Ah! it is a sad, sad story," wrote one who knows the country and the people well, "this of the extermination of the Christians under the unbelieving and unfeeling eyes of Europe." "Have you ever," he goes on to say, "tried to imagine yourselves for one moment in these poor creatures' condition? Did you ever think of your sweet wives and daughters in the hands of—— No, it isn't even to be mentioned, is it? Yet I have seen these poor, rough, half-civilised men weep like little children when they have *remembered*."

But to return to our midday repast of

tea and biscuits; for on that day our bread had come to an end. The air was so delicious, and our minds were so absorbed in our work and the far greater needs of the returned refugees, that I have no remembrance of feeling hungry then, or at any time during our pilgrimage.

Our companions made their Turkish coffee as they gathered round the fire which they had lighted at some distance from us. Our cavass waited on us most attentively, bringing from our saddle-bags everything that could minister to our comfort. We restfully reclined on the turf, and would gladly have slept off some of our weariness had there been time. But we dared not stop long; there was still a considerable distance to be traversed before we could reach the next village by sunset.

Not wishing to repeat the Cremen experience and sleep in a ruined village again, we, after much consultation with our men, found that we might distribute relief in Obidin, and get on to the little town of Dobrinishté for the night. We pressed forward in order to accomplish this end, and

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reached Obidin at half-past three. Outside the village we alighted, as we saw a little church standing on a low hill away from the ruins of the peasants' former habitations, and we thought we might use the porch of the building, running along the whole width of the church, as our rostrum from which to harangue the people and distribute our bounty.

We were always thankful to stand on any eminence, so as not to be crushed by the crowd. To those poor people we appeared very remarkable specimens of the human family, and they crowded round us and pushed the little ones in to look; felt us, and stroked us, and watched our every movement, as children do when they are on a visit to the animals at the Zoo.

News soon spread that we had arrived, and in a very short time the church was surrounded, and our work began. I so managed that they should not see where I kept the gold, and I think our doings appeared to them quite like the miracle of "the loaves and fishes," as the supply failed not, and hundreds were provided with the necessary

money for a fresh start in life. No one ever raised any objection to the principle on which I helped them, viz., that those with the greatest number of children should receive the largest amount. But when one sturdy fellow announced that he had sixteen children, all living, I felt it would be a premium on such unnecessarily large families to reward him accordingly, and I treated him as I did when the number reached only to twelve.

There was no fear of our being deceived, for every one knew every one's affairs, and they were not sensitive about plain speaking. The priest generally took part in the proceedings, and showed his knowledge of his flock.

I was much concerned at the evident absence of any deep regard for cleanliness on the part of the priesthood, but hardly liked to be very personal; so I took an opportunity, when I noticed the sheep were following very closely in the footsteps of their shepherd, to ask him why he didn't teach them to keep themselves clean? He found it a difficult question to answer, and turned the subject, but I have always hoped that the arrow hit the mark.

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We found the condition of things at Obidin much the same as at Cremen, though more houses had been left standing, a few of the inhabitants having remained behind when the rest fled.

How they had lived through the winter was a mystery which we could not solve.

As soon as we had accomplished our work, we started off to reach our night's resting-place, and our horses' hoofs clattered into Dobrinishté at eventide. We dismounted in a small yard of the only inn in the place, and climbed a ladder to a square, open balcony into which the guest-rooms opened. The bedrooms were also the sitting-rooms and dining-rooms, but these contained no bed or chairs or tables. Our hearts sank! The prospect was not much better than that of the night before, but we thought we would be very clever, and ordered four planks of wood, two for each of us, to lie upon. Wood is a commodity always to be obtained, and the planks were soon brought. We raised them from the ground on some logs, and contemplated the possibility of sleep. At ten o'clock we retired. The arrangement was disappointing.

The planks were narrow, and it required more training than time allowed to make ourselves comfortable. The boards were extremely hard, with nothing to soften them, and we soon discovered that the very purpose for which we raised them from the ground failed to accomplish its end. We gave up the idea of sleep, and sat up, not daring to lean against the wall, for fear of those creatures who know no rest at night, and are not prepared to succumb to the attractions held out by a certain well-known and much-advertised "powder."

We kept a watch on the floor, the walls, and the ceiling, and while philosophising on the power of the imagination, and reflecting that "things are not always what they seem," we decided to regard the inhabitants of our room as angels in disguise, and thus we passed the slow hours of the night, and hailed with exuberant joy the coming of the morning.

On that day we were to make our way to Mehomia, and this necessitated our passing through the district where Miss Stone had been captured. The Turks were not anxious for another such affair, knowing they might

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not get out of the dilemma quite as easily as on the former occasion. From Dobrinishté, therefore, about twenty extra men had been ordered out, to accompany us and to watch from the hills overlooking the narrow valley through which we had to pass, lest the insurgents, who were known to be hovering about in the neighbourhood, should swoop down upon us.

The country in this neighbourhood is very mountainous and richly wooded, and we saw how easy it would be for bandits to conceal themselves, and jump out upon us without our having any warning.

Suddenly, as we reached the thickest depth of the wood, a cry arose, and I believe, for a moment, our hearts were in our mouths, but the shout came from one of our men, who had been startled by a member of our additional escort dropping down before him from a rock hard by.

With some difficulty I persuaded our company to halt in this romantic spot, that we might partake of our noonday refreshment. A bugle was sounded, to make it known among the hills that we were not alone, and as the



echoes died away, we began to boil the water for our tea. Having had nothing but a raw egg since six o'clock that morning, we were quite ready for our meal.

The simple repast of tea and biscuits was hastily despatched, as the men who were responsible for our safety were anxious. They knew the deplorable condition of the bands for want of funds, and I had money enough about my person to make my capture worth while. I cannot say I experienced any fear whatever. Rightly or wrongly, I trusted my Bulgarian friends. I had seen their gratitude for the help rendered to their people. I had conversed with some of their leaders. I had had their blessing invoked upon me, and I did not imagine they would injure a hair of my head, and above and beyond all, I had gone forth, as I believed, at the call of God, to His suffering ones, and whatever befell me I was prepared to accept as His will, and be perfectly satisfied that it was right.

The journey from Dobrinishté to Mehomia was not a long one, and early in the afternoon we rode past a military encampment stationed just outside the little town. I had said to my

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companion, as we travelled along, "To-night I am going to be very firm, and we will not sleep under any roof, but in the fields." On seeing the soldiers' tents, I pleaded for one to be prepared for us, and before very long Hassan and our men set it up in a charming field, which had a broad stream running through it. The town, with its red-tiled roofs and pretty white minarets, lay along the opposite hillsides, making a charming picture for us to contemplate. A table and a couple of chairs were brought for us. We felt we were at last getting back to civilised life. The stream supplied us with plenty of water for washing purposes, and on the strength of it we put on our best gowns, and felt quite grand.

The officers of our party were looking forward to a good dinner, they told us, for they had met some of their old friends, and wished to improve the occasion. Evidently, from the sounds of merriment which we heard, they had a fine time together, judged by their standard.

When their festivities were over, one of the officials, who had been exceedingly polite to us

all through the journey, came to our tent door, and with many apologies and bows, presented us with some oranges and two bottles of beer ! He thought he knew the tastes of the English, and that nothing could give more pleasure than such an offering. Being a very ardent teetotaller, the gift was somewhat misplaced, and I felt not a little aggrieved that my country should seem to be branded with a brewer's hall-mark.

That night we slept, but it was not through the beer, for I had no taste of that. We lay down on the grass and were soon in the land of dreams, lost, for a time, to our condition of weariness. Leaving Mehomia the following day, after having attended to the needs of Bellitza so far as our funds would allow, we made our way to Joumia Balla—our last resting-place before re-entering Bulgaria.

Shortly before sunset, stiff and sore with long travelling and excessive heat, we reached the outskirts of the village. Our little horses were tired; we were dusty and hot, and longing to find a place where we could be undisturbed.

As we approached a sea of white tents, we

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learnt we must pay toll by presenting ourselves to the Military Pacha, who waits on guard, that he may interview all strangers who pass that way.

We dismounted, and walked up to his Pavilion. He received us graciously, offered us seats, and evidently meant to profit by the advent of two ladies, who had come from far, and who might give him some information concerning the world at large.

I have always hoped that the good man does not measure the capacity of Englishwomen by our conversation that evening, for we were too tired to be anything but very dull companions. Coffee was served twice over, and as we sipped it, he eagerly inquired if we had any news, from recent papers, concerning the war in the Far East. He took the keenest interest in all that was going on, chuckling over Russia's losses, and more than once expressing himself as greatly delighted at the thought that she was going to be conquered. "So good for us," he said; "we have peace now, and everything is quiet. Russia is at the bottom of all our troubles."

We spoke warmly of the beauty of his

country, which pleased him, but we could not speak with admiration of his Government; so on that point we observed a discreet silence. I believe we nearly dozed as he chatted on in French, for we hardly knew how to keep our eyes open. My companion had declared, on dismounting, that she could not possibly ride a step further, and we, therefore, ventured to ask the Pacha if any conveyance could be found for us, as we were quite a mile away from the town. He offered us his carriage, and said he would see that a tent was put up for us in the neighbourhood.

In about an hour's time the carriage arrived, and the man-servant escorted us to our tent, which, to our great disappointment, proved to be one that had been much occupied, and was full of stuffed seats, unwholesome-looking beds, and things we would rather have dispensed with. However, there was nothing for it but to try once more to let nature have her way. But there are certain things nature abhors beside a vacuum, and, in fact, will not put up with, and we were again only too thankful, when morning dawned, with the prospect that, some time on the following day, we might

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find ourselves in our comfortable hotel at Sofia.

We had said "Goodbye" to our little steeds, and were about to part with our good Hassan. He would have liked to accompany me to England, and truly I should have been nothing loth had circumstances permitted. With much regret we separated, hoping that some day we might meet again.

The journey from Joudia Balla was tedious. No one could be found who had the faintest idea of the distance or much knowledge of the road. Drivers were sent for, and after a very heated discussion, it was decided that the only thing to be done was to go on to another place ten miles off, where we *might* get more knowledge than could be obtained at Joudia. This being so, we bargained with a man to take us the first ten miles. He knew well our helpless condition, and charged accordingly. At noon we drove into a little village, the inhabitants of which came forth to have a look at us, and the sight occasioned considerable interest. We were obliged to turn out into the middle of the road with our baggage and all our belongings. It was an amusing picture.

We sat down on our luggage—there being nothing else to sit upon—and discussed the situation. The villagers surrounded us. They certainly knew there was such a place as Sofia, but where? That they could not say. Men were fetched whose geographical knowledge might be more advanced, and they were put forward for examination. It was not a matter to be quickly settled; it required time. A kind fellow, looking out from his office window, saw us frizzling in the sun, and coming out, offered us seats in his room. We gladly accepted the kind suggestion, and having gone in, were regaled with cherries, for which we blessed him. Where the need for all the talk came in, we could not discover, but these people have a talent for discussion, and they rarely let their talent lie idle. After prolonged conversation, a spokesman was sent to tell me that some one had been found who would drive us to another village, where they felt certain that the information we were in search of could be obtained. How far was it to this village? "Ten miles."

Valuable knowledge is generally obtained under difficulties, and we were learning a

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good many things beside the distance to Sofia; so we decided to be introduced to the next village. Some time was taken up in harnessing the horses; at least that was the plea put in for the delay. We were not too dull, for all our tiredness, to fail to see that our man was going to make use of us to do business for the whole village. At last, after several pauses for neighbours to have a final word impressing upon our driver "not to forget," he mounted his box, and whipped his three horses, as if they were to blame for our not having started earlier.

Late in the afternoon we clattered over the slippery cobble-stones of a little town, and were deposited at an inn, where a few men were lounging about smoking.

We felt doubtful about reaching Sofia that night, but were assured we could do so with fresh horses and a man who knew the way. The possibilities of sleeping at the inn were surrounded with a darkness we did not care to penetrate; so, placing ourselves at the disposal of a driver who promised, for the sum of three napoleons, to land us at the Hotel Bulgaria, at some time or other, we were soon on the road again.



We had an open vehicle ; daylight was still with us ; the country was beautiful, and, with the prospect of a good night before us, our spirits rose. But when darkness came on, and we were travelling in and out of the mountains for hours, hardly seeing anything before us, and not meeting any human being on the way, a weird feeling came over us. At midnight we seemed no nearer any city than when we had started. I thought that journey would never end. We kept on peering out into the darkness for a sign of light, but none could be seen. At last there was a glimmer before us, and our driver pulled up by a little wayside hostel, got down and washed his horses' faces, disappeared for some drink, mounted his seat, and off we went, losing ourselves again among the hills. By that time, owing to the suspense and fatigue we had gone through, I don't think we much cared what became of us.

However, at length, in the early morning, we drove up to the door of the familiar hotel, made our way to our room, tumbled into bed, and knew nothing of the outside world till far on into the day.

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After having accomplished the journey through Macedonia and back, it became necessary for me to return to England. I hoped to be able to raise more money for the Thracian refugees who were remaining in Bulgaria, fearful of re-entering Turkey, not knowing what might await them there. They were terrified by the experiences of some of their companions. Promises had been sent over to the people that, if they would come back, they would be allowed to settle down in their old homes and to the cultivation of their fields. Six courageous young men ventured, foolishly some said, but their land, their houses, and their families exerted a magnetic influence upon them. The day after their return, however, they were thrown into prison. I never heard what became of them, but this incident deterred others from following for some time.

It was not till the Bulgarian Government brought considerable pressure to bear upon the people round the Bourgas district, that they re-crossed the frontier in any numbers, but, by August, the majority of the exiles were back again. Some few hundreds, however, for various reasons, still remained behind.

## THE RETURN TO THRACE

"Is true freedom but to break  
Fetters for our own dear sake,  
And with leathern hearts forget  
That we owe mankind a debt?  
No! true freedom is to share  
All the chains our brothers wear,  
And with heart and hand to be  
Earnest to make others free."

LOWELL.

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## CHAPTER VII

### THE RETURN TO THRACE

IN the autumn of 1904, I again made my way by the *Orient* to Adrianople, having ascertained that the returned refugees were in great need of clothing and seed-corn.

Things had quieted down to some extent. There were not so many soldiers at the frontier as on my former visit, and no bombs had recently been thrown. Consequently, the feeling of insecurity and of some impending danger, was not uppermost in my mind.

Through the summer months, an American Missionary had been working to get tools for the people, that they might repair their damaged houses before the winter cold came upon them. Carpenters had been employed to help the men, and by the time I arrived

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there were not many homes uninhabited. On reaching Adrianople, arrangements had to be made to interview my old friend the Pacha once more. I went in the company of the American Missionary, who had ingratiated himself in the eyes of the Turkish authorities ; so I easily gained all I asked for, and was informed through the interpreter—the Pacha speaking only Turkish—that he was very pleased to find me in such good company.

Having received permission to visit the town of Kirk Kilissé, which I was so anxious to see, we started off for that place as early as possible the following morning, thus not giving the Pacha the opportunity of changing his mind.

It was a bright autumn day, and we had our breakfast of black coffee, bread, and sour cheese, on the verandah overlooking the courtyard of the inn.

Time is of no account in Turkey. There is only one event which induces the people to hurry, and that is a funeral. If you see men hastening along the road, you may be sure a corpse is being carried to its last resting-place. Some merit appears to be attached to

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the speed with which the body is conveyed to the grave as soon as life has fled.

I watched the deliberate manner in which our three horses were harnessed to the carriage, and the antics of the many gray and black cats that played hide-and-seek round a huge walnut-tree. My luggage was, at last, corded on behind; my companion—measuring six feet six inches—was tucked in, with his bundles, by my side, and then off we went.

One of our horses was ornamented, as usual, with a bright blue bead necklace, to keep off the evil eye. I believe in this particular instance it was the gift of an ostler, who wondered at our audacity in venturing upon such a journey without that protection.

It was a long drive from Adrianople to Kirk Kilissé; the road was bad and uninteresting, but improved as we neared our destination.

As the sun was setting, we saw the town lying before us, closely packed with red-roofed houses, the minarets of the mosques rising far above everything else, from which at sunset the priests call the faithful to prayer. It is a big town, containing 20,000 inhabitants.

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The houses are old and crooked, mostly built of wood and stone, heavily covered with the thickest tiles I ever saw, and the massive chimneys looked large enough to contain a staircase inside them. In fact, I found that, when any obstruction or defect occurs, a ladder is placed inside, and the members of the family walk up to see what requires attention.

There is always a great show of hurry at the end of a journey, the tired little horses being urged to their utmost speed. So, over the stones and through the mud, we dashed along the Kirk Kilissé streets. The open shops displayed their wares on the counters stretching out into the thoroughfare. Butchers' goods, as usual, were more numerous than any others, and made a great show of hearts, livers, heads, and huge chunks of meat, which are carried off by the buyers, who swing them about as they walk. Hence one is always in danger of being marked with crimson patches by too close contact with the crowd of human beings, the streets rarely being empty till night comes on.



## THE RETURN TO THRACE 141

Toward evening the barbers' shops are filled. The customers are sometimes seen sitting in the street, their chins covered with soap-lather, and looking, as men do under such circumstances, pitiable objects of depressed helplessness. Patrols of armed soldiers, more or less in rags, slouched along. Sentries stood at the street corners—cowed, miserable-looking creatures, wondering if "Reforms" were ever coming their way, so that they might receive some of the arrears of pay, long owing for their dogged obedience to the powers that be. The buffalo-carts laboured along with incessant screeches from their unoiled axles and the heavy weights they carried.

We found ourselves in a narrow, sloping passage, with cobbles big enough to form a kind of staircase, down which our horses slid, and at the bottom a crowd of children threw open a yard-gate, rushed into the house, and announced that we had arrived! For this they expected to be handsomely rewarded. The Pastor's wife greeted us, and led the way into a clean wooden Turkish house, which had been hired for our convenience. We

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slept there, but were obliged to go into the town whenever we required a meal.

It was very soon known that I had arrived, and a kind message came from a wealthy Greek merchant, asking if I would go and stay with him, as he was sure the accommodation I had to put up with was not suitable. But I had not gone out for the sake of having a "good time," and felt I could get into touch with the people much better in my humbler quarters. So, while thanking him warmly, I declined his invitation.

Several of my old friends from Bourgas found me out, and I spent a considerable time in receiving and paying calls upon the refugees who had returned. Tales of sorrow, still fresh to the victims, were poured by them into my ears, and I can never forget the condition of one poor mother, who had had a deep wound made in her neck a year before, which had never healed. Both her arms were useless from numerous sword-cuts. Her husband and children had been beheaded before her eyes, and she herself had been left for dead. She had lain on the floor of her dwelling, with her slaughtered ones beside her, for two

## THE RETURN TO THRACE 143

days before her neighbours discovered she was still living. Her face was scarred all over with the wounds she had received. These people are hard to kill, or surely the suffering, the fright, and the miserable living of the past years, would have brought this woman's sad life to an end. What a life it had been! but I noticed, as I so often had occasion to do in other instances, the stolid, patient manner in which grief was borne. There was no complaining, only the tears were always ready to flow as the memory of the past was recalled.

Several weeks were spent between Kirk Kilissé and Malko Tirnova, a village twenty miles off. In the latter place I found a far greater number of my old Bourgas friends than in the former, and it was deeply interesting to see them once more, now in their own homes about which I had heard so much. Very busy had the people been, before my arrival, in repairing their houses. Scarcely a roof had remained uninjured; the doors and the window-frames had been used by the soldiers for firewood, and the floors had been dug up, in search of any treasures which

## 144 CRITICAL TIMES IN TURKEY

might have been hidden beneath. Hence to repair all the damage done was no easy or speedy task.

Our chief work, through those weeks, consisted in providing clothing for the people, and giving them seed for their fields, which had been left untouched for a year or more.

Nearly fifty villages had been destroyed, and people from the surrounding districts came over, from day to day, to fetch the corn we had bought for them. Altogether we supplied sufficient grain to sow some nine hundred fields. A huge barn was lent for our purposes, and round the door crowds of fathers and mothers were to be seen patiently waiting their turn to receive that which meant the future means of living for their families. Many were feeble from exposure and poor living, and it was most touching to see how they tottered under their loads, which, at the same time, they were quite eager to carry even many miles.

“ I met a slender little maid, a heavy burden bearing,  
‘ Is it not heavy, dear ? ’ I said, as past me she was  
hurrying ;

## THE RETURN TO THRACE 145

She looked at me with grave sweet eyes, this fragile little mother,  
And answered, as in swift surprise, 'Oh no, sir, it's my brother!'

And so it seemed to me, as I tried to help some of them lift their heavy load, that they would have been surprised if I had doubted their willingness to be so laden.

One day a poor little girl lingered behind after the barn-door had been closed, and the people had gone to their homes. Looking at us with pleading eyes, she asked if she might have some corn. What could she do with the corn? we inquired. She began to cry, and her story was so sad that we went back with her to see if all she told us was correct. It was only too true. Father and mother had been killed, and she had one little sister younger than herself to take care of. Two almost babes had thus been left alone in a sad, troubled world, under the rule of those who know nothing approaching to the beautiful truth that "of such is the kingdom of heaven." She took us to see the ruins of their former home. The walls were standing, and the roof was on, but that was about all.

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It presented the appearance of a rough stable, and we went off immediately to find a man willing to put the place into repair. What a business-like little woman she was, this child of ten or twelve years of age, and how eager to help the men we enlisted to render the home fit to live in! She worked away so vigorously that when she had finished her task, her poor little hands were quite sore with plastering the walls. But she would help in her eagerness to return to the old home. Before many days had passed, she was the proud mistress of the beloved cottage, once more fit for habitation. We gave her the needful material for weaving, and obtained a loom for her. I doubt not that before long she and her sister will be clothed in homespun garments, and our little heroine will be dreaming of her trousseau.

Life in Malko Tirnova is of the simplest. We lived much as the peasants do; sat on the floor by their wood fires; slept under yourgans—a thick combination of wool and cotton, doing duty for sheet, blanket, and counterpane, and possessing the very unpleasant knack of falling off if one attempted

## THE RETURN TO THRACE 147

to move. We ate their black bread, and chunks of meat, which floated in greasy water. No parts of an animal are left out in their culinary arrangements. Ears, eyes, and teeth are all chopped up, for these people are not fastidious in their tastes.

I had callers every day from among those I had helped during the previous winter. They came to tell me how their lives had been saved by us, and to thank me again for coming out to see them. To make their gratitude more real, they brought me walnuts from their trees, quinces and grapes, milk and fowls. One poor woman, who possessed nothing she could give, begged me to let her wash my clothes. How pathetic it was to witness their anxiety that I should go and sit with them in their houses, not, they would add, that we ask you to give us anything more, but that we may feel you have seen our homes! History repeats itself, and many a time my thoughts wandered back to the early periods of the Christian Church, to the persecutions, the trials of faith, the generous feelings of gratitude to

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those who put forth a helping hand, which led the Apostle to write of other dwellers in Macedonia, that they in much affliction and deep poverty "abounded unto the riches of their liberality; for, according to their power, they gave of their own accord, beseeching us with much entreaty in regard to this grace."

Almost every day the Pastor's wife and I went down to their "beautiful fountain," of which I heard much when at Bourgas. Pretty groups of girls were to be seen standing in the deep pool, formed by the overflow of the water, which rose to their knees. There they washed their clothes with rapid movement, evidently enjoying their work, and then, at the ends of a long pole, balanced carefully over their shoulders, they carried off the dripping garments with quick, firm step, homeward up the hill.

On the first Sunday after my arrival at Malko Tirnova, I joined the villagers in their worship at the Greek Church. Their religion constitutes a very large part of their lives. The men crowd to church in the early morning, and the worshippers stand through-



## THE RETURN TO THRACE 149

out the two hours' service. Little children wander in, and watch with earnest, solemn eyes for the moment when they should cross themselves, and tiny dots of three and four years of age bring their candle offerings, and wait for their mothers to lift them up that they may kiss the "Holy Book."

There was much singing, if singing it could be called—harsh, discordant sounds, led by a throng of boys who sat in one corner of the building, before long tables covered with loaves to be given out to the poor at the close of the service. We were all freely censed, and candles were offered us to burn for some departed neighbours. When these ceremonies were ended, a sermon was preached. The priest, a kindly elderly man, mounted no pulpit, but in the midst of his flock gave them the simplest teaching on loving one another, describing what a beautiful world it would be if we did but carry out Christ's teaching, and keep back the feelings and words that lead to strife. When he paused, a blessing was pronounced, and the people dispersed.

We were often hearing of men who had

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been released from prison. The principles upon which the "Sublime Porte" acts, both in imprisoning and releasing captives, is a mystery too deep for the ordinary European mind to grasp. Sometimes the intervention of an Englishman, or of an American, or even an Englishwoman, will effect the freedom of some prisoner. I conversed with two young men in Malko Tirnova, who had been sentenced to fifteen years' incarceration. They were schoolmasters, and were suspected, as all teachers are, of being connected with the revolutionary movement. So, with twenty-three companions, they had been marched off to prison. They had lived over two years in a dark, damp cell, about nine feet square, in which twenty-five persons were crowded. Two died shortly after they entered; five were dying of consumption at the time when the above-mentioned two were released. There seemed to have been no trial, as far as I could ascertain, and why they were picked out for freedom and the rest were retained, they did not seem to know. Perhaps it was to keep up the Turkish fiction of the "very wrong reports which have got

## THE RETURN TO THRACE 151

abroad as to the condition of things in Turkey"—a condition which, some of the authorities tell us, they are doing their best to correct. Men are sometimes released as a mark of the "clemency of the Sublime Porte," but they know perfectly well that something worse than imprisonment may await them, and these two young men told me that they must leave their village and relations, and seek a home elsewhere, for they would never be safe again in their own country, and this meant the loss to them of all they possessed of material prosperity.

Thus Turkey kills, or otherwise gets rid of, the best manhood in the land. As we said "Goodbye" to our young friends, we found much food for reflection.

Though at that time quiet prevailed, fears for the future still held sway. The girls dared not go into the forests to cut firewood, or venture out after dark. This was not surprising, for, now and again, terrible deeds were done, and every one blamed every one else for their occurrence.

Three young men started one day, during my stay in Malko Tirnova, to sow their fields

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at some little distance from their village. They took their oxen and food enough to last a few days, for the fields were large, and the work would require some time. When evening came on, they retired to their little hut, which stood, as is usual, on the edge of the property, to enable them, at the first streak of light, to begin their labour.

They gathered round their wood fire, and, as they talked together, two strangers entered, and, in the flickering light from the burning logs, the occupants of the hut knew not if the men were friends or foes. They were, however, not long left in doubt. Out of their broad red sashes the ruffians—for so they proved themselves—drew the ever-ready daggers, and plunged them into the bodies of the young men.

All three were left for dead; the oxen were stolen, and the strangers went their way.

After a day or two, some neighbours, on passing the field, discovered the lifeless bodies of two of the youths, and found that the third still breathed. Carefully and tenderly he was conveyed back to the village, and received into the first neighbour's house they passed.

## THE RETURN TO THRACE 153

There he lay on the floor for days, neither speaking nor moving, his arms terribly cut, his neck and chest showing deep dagger wounds. As I sat by his side, and looked upon him with deep sympathy, I was told he had been lying in that condition for more than a week. He had not once spoken, and it seemed almost impossible he could recover; but these hardy peasants, with their simple ways and out-of-door life, can endure what would kill any ordinary man.

His mother—a widow—watched by his side, as he gradually recovered consciousness, and, by the time I left the village, he was getting well.

It is not known, and probably never will be, who made the attack. These things are so common, that little or no notice is taken of them, and none can feel assured, as they go forth to field or farm in the morning, that they will ever return to their homes and families.

It was said to me by one, "We never go to bed at night without the thought that we may be massacred before the morning."

Joys and sorrows are curiously mingled in

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the exciting times in which the people live. Suddenly a man disappears, and for years no news of him is heard. As suddenly, sometimes, he may come home again, but it is hardly known whence or how he has arrived. I met with a remarkable and interesting illustration of such events.

One of the mothers whom I had befriended in Bulgaria, and who had stayed behind when her companions returned, decided to go back and see if her house was still standing, and if it would be safe to bring her children to the old home once more. She was a woman with a heavy heart. Her husband had been in prison in Asia Minor for more than three years, and though she still clung with wonderful tenacity to the hope that she might some day meet him again, there was no ground for such a hope. How many had gone, never to return! She made her way over the hills, down into the valley, through the familiar streets, to the well-known homestead, thinking, as she went, of the many prayers she had breathed forth to God. "If only Thou wouldst let me see my husband again, I would ask Thee for nothing more."

## THE RETURN TO THRACE 155

"The Father hears the mighty cry of anguish,  
And gives His answering messages to thee."

She reached the old door; slipped her finger through the latch-hole, lifted the long wooden bar, and walked in. All was silent. The windows had been broken; the floor had been dug up in search of hidden treasure; the large chimney-corner, where she had so often sat with her husband and children, was empty, and the place looked unutterably desolate. She stood for a moment, and as her tears fell, a step was heard. Was she dreaming? Whose step could it be but her husband's? She hardly dared to turn round, as her heart bounded with the thought that God *was* going to answer her prayer. Then she felt the old loving arms round her, and her husband bent to kiss the face he had yearned for during the long years of his suffering, misery, and confinement.

In Eastern fashion, she called her neighbours and friends together to rejoice with her that the one, who had been lost, was found. They brought food, logs, cushions, and all else that was necessary for the husband and wife, who were now restored to their own

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fireside. The years of waiting and the anguish of separation has already begun to appear as "a tale that is told."

Stories were narrated of the long march to prison; how some, through age or weakness, fainted by the way, but were brought to consciousness by a thrust from a bayonet; how some died on the road, God sending His angels to loosen their chains; till, at length, the prisoners, in a straggling line, were driven into some terrible cell, there to await the mockery of a trial.

The husband of one young wife had been taken from her and sent off to prison. Years passed, and she heard that his clothes were dropping to pieces, no garments being provided by the authorities. She spent all she had in procuring materials, and, with the quick fingers of love, made the needed articles, thinking, as she stitched away, of the one who was to wear them. The parcel was packed and sent off, but it never reached her husband. Before it had arrived at the prison it was stolen, and the news of the theft reached the young wife. As I talked with her she drew the face of her child to



## THE RETURN TO THRACE 157

her lips—the little one whom the father had never seen—in order to hide the tears which expressed her agony of soul.

“It would have grieved  
Your very soul to see her—still I feel  
The story linger in my heart. I fear  
’Tis long and tedious, but my spirit clings  
To that poor woman—so familiarly  
Do I perceive her manner and her look  
And presence; and so deeply can I feel  
Her goodness, that, not seldom in my walks  
A momentary trance comes over me;  
And to myself I seem to muse on one  
By sorrow laid asleep or borne away—  
A human being destined to awake  
To human life when he shall come again,  
For whom she suffers. Yes, it would have grieved  
Your very soul to see her.”

Again and again it has been said to me,  
“Is it not wonderful that God permits such things?” Alas! that we so little understand His ways, His will, His leading. *The* wonder is that *we* permit such things. Ever ready are we to thrust our responsibility upon God, and to credit Him with the consequences of our own selfishness. He gave us the opportunity of freeing these people from the intolerable yoke of the Turk. He

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put them, as it were, into our hands, and when "love's unforced obedience" should have dealt tenderly with them, we thrust them back into the flames, or into the hands of those who violate and torture. If we think God is going to do our work apart from us, we are very much mistaken. "By this shall men know that ye are My disciples, that ye have *love* one to another." Would not such love as Christ speaks of have rescued these Christians long since?

What have we done to show our love as a nation to those who have held out imploring hands to us? Some highly-placed officials call them rebels and revolutionists, and even dare to excuse the Sultan for putting down resistance, while they prefer not to be told *how* he does it.

We read with sympathy of the early martyrs, and stand, with admiring awe, in the Roman Coliseum as we recall the faith of those who suffered there. We sing in our churches of the multitude "who have come out of great tribulation, and washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," and if tears of emotion

## THE RETURN TO THRACE 159

fill our eyes, we feel it to be a great sign of grace, or even of heavenly-mindedness. We are still faced with the problem of the condition of these people ; but what are we doing ? what have we done these last twenty-six years ?

A great opportunity is yet before us. We see a worthy and patient race, bewildered with sorrow written in every line of their faces ; the women unnerved, the men desperate. Their blood has been poured out like water, and we have let it flow. Of the "good-will toward men," which He who loves us all came to herald, they have heard much but experienced little. And yet, and yet, "He hath shown thee, O man ! what is good ; and what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do justice, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God ?"

These strange, contemplative peasants of the mountains have a curiously quaint proverb which says, "The smaller saints will be the ruin of God."



## UNDER TURKISH RULE

"Ah, Saints! the bare and bleeding feet!  
Ah, Christ! the bruised and bleeding hands!  
Ah, God! the pallid faces there!  
One low, long sob goes through the street,  
One passionate curse God understands,  
One bitter agony of prayer."

*The Disciples.*



## CHAPTER VIII

### UNDER TURKISH RULE

**I**N writing of the present condition of affairs in Turkey, it is impossible to judge fairly of the actions to which the Bulgars have had recourse during recent years, unless we take account of the causes lying at the bottom of the continual unrest and uprising of the peoples living under the Ottoman rule, but who are not Muhamedans.

We are reminded of the sins and shortcomings of these peoples—sins, be it remembered, which must always follow centuries of oppression. They may be subtle and, at times, even deceitful, but their virtues, I am persuaded, far outweigh their vices. They have stood no chance of much progress under a Government that cares nothing to improve

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the condition of the population of any part of its dominions. But their keen desire for education, and their remarkable love of learning, if encouraged, would help largely to foster a higher degree of morality.

Their circumstances are still such as led to the liberation of Greece in 1827; of Moldavia and Wallachia in 1878; of Servia in 1878; of Bulgaria in 1878; of Eastern Roumelia in 1878; of Montenegro in 1878; of Bosnia in 1878; of Crete in 1896; of Cyprus in 1878; and of Egypt in 1881.

The causes of the discontent and rebellion, now stirring in Macedonia and Thrace, cannot be understood without some knowledge of what is involved in existing *Taxation*, *Legislation*, and *Education*.

*Taxation*.—One of the chief iniquities perpetrated on the Christian population in Turkey is the method of collecting the taxes. The Sultan's dominions having been considerably restricted, the taxes consequently fall the more heavily upon the provinces still left under his government. A certain amount of money has to be raised, and this without reference to the value of the property



taxed. The revenues are simply wrung out of the hands of the peasantry. Beside the regular demands, the Bey exacts his share, and the agents practise gross extortion. If the peasants do not respond at once to the calls for payment, they are seized, tortured, or imprisoned till they satisfy the demands made by their cruel tyrants.

Let me give an example. In the month of May, 1902, a levy of 2,000 "livres turques" (50,000 francs) was made on the village of Débra. The Christians declared they could not pay so large a sum, and offered 250 livres. The Albanians, irritated at this offer, fired upon them for several hours, and then blockaded the village, with a threat that they would obtain the money by some means. The peasants were left a short time to raise the amount demanded. Before the troops returned, the following letter was sent by their leader:—

"Oh, you infidel fools! I now tell you that Islian Garan is with me, and if you do not send me those 2,000 pounds, I will cut the throats of every one of you that I find in the village. By my faith as a believer, I say

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this. God Almighty will not succour you in any way. But as for you, Michael Tchalogski, remember how I sent word to you that you were not to farm out the forest near your town. You would not pay any attention to my orders ; so beware. You shall pay for it with your head. Take notice that I have 150 men at my back, and I will destroy you with blood and fire." (Translation.)

Supposing it to be impossible to raise the money required, then an opportunity occurs of thinning down the Bulgar population, and of carrying off the women for their own purposes.

Bouf had 245 houses. On the night of the 31st of July a detachment of 3,000 Turks, accompanied by a number of Bashi-bazouks, entered the village. They first broke into the houses, then into the barns, and afterwards set fire to the buildings, as well as to the Church of St. George. Nothing remained after this catastrophe but five desolated homes, and of these the Turkish soldiers took possession. Forty-four women and young girls were carried away into the Turkish

camp, and brutally treated by the men. A little later sixty insurgents appeared to protest against the iniquities perpetrated. A fight ensued; thousands of men came up, cut the throats of some of the people, and violated fifty-two women. In addition to the taxes on land, grain, fruit, hay, and wine, a small percentage is charged on instruction, though none of the proceeds find their way to the Christian schools. A special tax is levied on the army; another has to be paid on every child, and on every sheep, goat, or pig. The Christians are also at the expense of making the roads, and when repairs are needed, they are sent for to do the work, for which they receive no remuneration whatever.

The amount of tithe to be collected on cattle and harvest is decided by auction, and the collector may make what profit he pleases on the transactions. The valuation is often excessive, and, in many instances, the injustice is so great that the harvest is allowed to rot on the fields, in preference to paying the tax. All the Turkish officials are ill-paid, and what is due to them is so constantly in arrear that they extort by violence what they require

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from the peasants. The poor creatures are often even driven to cut down their fruit-trees in order to avoid that additional tax.

There are cases also in which a Turk settles down on the property of a Christian, lives in the house for years, reaps the benefit of cultivating the ground, and, adding insult to injury, *compels the owner to pay the taxes*. A young man had, very shortly before my first visit to Turkey, paid £10 for arrears of taxes on a property which he had inherited from his uncle, but had never been allowed to live on.

The Albanian alone defies the Turk, and will not pay any of his imposts. If any show of pressing the matter is made, the collector is killed, and no more is heard of the affair. The Albanians are too useful to the Turk in times of rebellion for him to make enemies of them, so they are allowed to do pretty much as they like. They know quite well how much the services they can render to their "Government" at any time are appreciated, and that a reward of a fresh supply of ammunition is likely to follow such services.

*Legislation.*—No Christian can appear

against a Turk in a Court of Law, and no Christian is allowed to carry, or even to possess, any weapons. It is almost impossible to exaggerate the evils to which this gives rise. Cattle can be stolen, food and lodgings can be demanded, and the peasants are helpless. They have no redress. Soldiers live at free quarters in the villages when it pleases them, and at night prefer such houses as are occupied only by women. A man, generally of bad character, is placed in every village to watch the people and their property. He procures Christian girls for the harems, often steals the produce of the harvest, which he sells, and is generally the terror of the Christian population. One young girl whom I met had broken a blood-vessel by screaming to be delivered from her persecutor. As I was sitting in the house of one of the peasants, a soldier marched in and demanded food to be prepared for him, as he was passing through the country.

At harvest-time Turks often arrive and carry off carts and men for work they wish accomplished, so that the corn cannot be gathered in. Everything seems to be done

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MEMORANDUM

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FROM : THE SECRETARY

SUBJECT: [Illegible]

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to exasperate the people. If they complain, they are massacred in a wholesale manner, and it is thought by many that the risings are deliberately provoked to serve as excuses for butchery. Sure it is that, in not a few instances, the leaders who have inaugurated the slaughter have received some decoration from the Palace, as a sign of the peculiar gratification of the Sultan.

The Turks go about armed. Every man carries a dagger in his girdle, and rifles, swords, and cartridges are so common a part of the men's costume that, on my first returning to other parts of Europe, every one looked to me somewhat undressed. Added to this, visitations are periodically made to see if any rifle or dagger has been concealed in the dwellings of the Christians. Should a denial on the point be given, a search is instituted, and if no weapon is discovered, a resort is had to torture. In conversation with a well-educated Bulgarian insurgent, who had devoted weeks of his time to helping us in our distribution of clothing to his people, I questioned him as to the possibility of doing any good by rising, and pointed out the probability of losing the sympathy of



the European powers, especially of England, if the policy of destruction was continued for the purpose of exciting attention and sympathy. His face grew sad, and with suppressed emotion he answered me by another question—"What would your people do if they saw their children spiked on the bayonet of a rifle before their mothers' eyes, in order to obtain information about the existence of arms which they did not possess? Would your English men sit still and be quiet, as they tell us to do—*would they?* A man does not forget such a sight as that in a lifetime, and I have seen it more than once." What could I say to him? What could I think of my own countrymen if such horrors would not stir them to action?

Mr. H. Nevinson, who has done so much in connection with the Balkan Committee work, writes, as I have hardly dared to do, of what he has seen, and I was assured that worse things had happened round the Adrianople Vilayet than even in the Monastir district. He says:—

"Beside these people, who had returned from the mountains to their ruined homes,

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I saw places which had been marked with atrocities that one can hardly describe. I saw villages where the Turkish *gendarmes* told me that they had counted, after the massacre, thirty and more bodies of women and children lying along the street. I saw one village where, while I was still at Ochrida, the Turkish Commission had been sent under the pretence of collecting hidden arms, and where they had taken the priest of the place and the mayor and beaten them with sticks so that the priest died. I saw a place by the side of the railway near Florina—a railway which everybody who goes to Macedonia has to pass up and down—where, only a few days before I was there, there were the bodies of some eighty men lying in a little stream, where they had been butchered as they were being brought into jail by the regular troops, who stood them up in a row and cut their throats one after the other. I saw another village where there was another inquiry for arms, and two Turkish regular officers, with a party of regular soldiers, went there and took the priest and the mayor, and bound them up like chickens, and rolled them in the hot

ashes of a wooden fire, so that the mayor died and the priest had his flesh burnt off. Then they took a woman and held her over the same ashes so that her skin came off. These things are absolutely true; you can find them in the Blue Book for yourselves; they were reported by our Consuls—by our excellent Consul, Mr. Graves, at Salonica, and by our Vice-Consul at Monastir, Mr. McGregor. They were supported by the evidence of everybody who went up and down that line at Florina; and, in the case of the Zonsko atrocity, it is supported by the confession of the two Turkish officers who did the outrage. There is another subject, on which one can hardly speak—it has already been referred to. One cannot speak plainly on it, but in these villages which I visited I have often found women lying there stupefied, having lost their reason and unable to realise what was going on around them. They had lost their minds because of the horrible things that they had suffered at the hands of the Turks. There have been brought to our hospitals at Castoria girls mad, barking and howling like dogs, finding themselves with

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child from the things they had suffered last autumn."

A pathetic appeal was sent by the representatives of the village of Strowmitza to Pacha Assan Fehmi as follows :—

"YOUR EXCELLENCE,—

"We, as faithful subjects of his Majesty the Sultan, have the honour of addressing you. There is no security for us in the land of our fathers. We tremble at the atrocities inflicted upon us. Deign to listen to our prayers and groans, and cast a glance upon our bodies. They are at your feet, place your finger upon them; alleviate our sufferings; make it possible for us to live as others do, and to do our duty to the Sovereign, our neighbours, our children, and our wives! We appeal to your Excellency in the belief that you alone can deliver us from the dangers which threaten us. For some days we have had in the villages imperial troops, sent for our protection, but it is these very troops that have put us into the condition in which we are. The first time, eight hundred of these men came, and raised their tents in the very

centre of our village and set to work to search for arms. We gave up all we had in the way of pistols and muskets, most of which, moreover, were corroded with rust. Your Excellency can verify this with your own eyes. But this did not satisfy the leader of the regiment, for he kept on demanding from us more guns—guns of a kind of which we know absolutely nothing. He gave us three days' respite to hand over to him guns of a certain pattern, but as we had none of them, we sent our fellow-countrymen, Athanasius Ilieff, Theodore Gueorguieff, Athanasius Pope Nocoloff, and Vassil Petroff, the priest, to acquaint him of the fact. In reply, the colonel ordered them to be flogged till they gave up the weapons he asked for. Athanasius P. Nicoloff, unable to endure the agony of the torture, escaped from the hands of his tormentors by giving the colonel a gratuity of twelve pounds." Then follows a description of the tortures inflicted on the others, which I will spare the reader, and the letter closes with the following appeal: "In laying this before your Excellency we appeal to your Excellency's humanitarian feelings, and beg

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that prompt measures may be taken to relieve our sad fate. Without such help our life in the village is impossible. The Imperial power and authority are great. We dare to hope that your Excellency, as representative of this authority, will lend us your support and succour, that the calamity which is about to fall upon our heads may be averted, and that everything may be done to give us the possibility of living in peace, for the happiness of our children and the fulfilment of our duties toward the Government.

“On behalf of the Villagers,

[The village seal.]

“*December 25, 1902.*”

Is there anything unreasonable in the above epistle? Several letters, couched in the most respectful terms and containing most legitimate requests, have been sent from various villages to the Valis, but they never produce any sign of attention. The writers become marked men, and it is not forgotten that it would be desirable to put them out of the way, so that they may never again make any appeal

on behalf of their countrymen. In order to prove that the Christians are peaceably inclined, and would occasion no trouble if their cruel masters were removed, let me give the following illustration of what took place in the year 1887 at Monastir: A Mussulman, more humane and enlightened than the generality of officials, allowed the Christian villagers to enlist as rural guards and carry weapons in self-defence, in place of the *bekjis*. The result was most satisfactory; peace and order were maintained, but though the change was inaugurated by a Turk, and approved by several Mussulmans, the Bey saw his living was in jeopardy, and therefore, under the sanction of the Sultan, removed the man who was thought to be interfering with his prerogative and increasing the power of the Christians.

Descriptions of the scenes which so constantly occur in one form or another are chronicled by these poor despairing people, and the memory of them cannot fail to confirm the decision which I heard more than once from the leaders of the Bands, "We *must* die before our time, and rather than be

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butchered to death by the Turks, we will die in an effort—even if it be a vain one—to free our country from her persecutors, and gain liberty for our descendants. The village of Zagoritcham was the largest and richest in the district of Kostour. The somewhat unusual culture of its inhabitants offended the Turks, and they sought a favourable opportunity of expressing their disapproval and wreaking their hatred on the inhabitants. On the 14th of August, the village was blockaded by an army of 4,000 men, and the fires, which soon blazed on the hills around, foreshadowed the miseries about to fall on the people. On the following morning, when the flames had surrounded the village, almost all the inhabitants had fled. Only a few cripples and infirm people remained behind. Amongst these there was an insurgent, Alesco Banoff by name, aged thirty-five, who had been wounded in the foot. His family consisted of his old mother, his sister, his wife, and one little child, and they were all with him. Acute pain kept him prisoner to his bed, where he could hardly move. With tears in his eyes he begged his family to flee and leave him to



his fate. He was armed with a revolver, and if need be, he could put an end to himself. But what mother could have a heart hard enough to forsake her child at such a moment? What wife would abandon her husband under such circumstances? They resolved to die together. Sitting round his bed, they lamented their fate aloud. The Turkish regiment had already begun to set fire to the houses. It was not long before Alesco heard the cries uttered by the victims who were being killed. He soon caught the sound of the men's footsteps, and foresaw that, before long, his house would be broken into. What was he to do? Was it of any use to plead for mercy? He knew that by so doing he would only court greater ferocity. The dilemma was a difficult one. Poor fellow! He was young, and life was dear—and his loved ones were dearer still. Could he, on the other hand, put an end to himself and leave his beloved to the fate before them? What would become of them? Under a sudden impulse, this young man, *sans peur et sans reproche*, grew calm. He had decided. Gathering up his remaining strength to carry

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out his purpose, he, with one shot, laid his wife dead at his feet, with a bullet through the heart. With a second shot his child shared the same fate. A third slightly wounded his sister in the shoulder, and she fainted on the floor. Lastly, he pointed his revolver at his mother, but, at the sight of the one who had given him birth, power failed him, and his weapon fell from his hand. He had sacrificed his wife, his child, and his sister—but his mother! For one moment he was seized with horror at the thought, but the noise at the outer door recalled him to his senses. His mind was made up. Without hesitating, he fired the last two shots—one into his mother's heart, the other into his own mouth. The soldiers burst into the room, and found five corpses, as they thought, bathed in blood. They left, and as the sister recovered consciousness, what a sight met her eyes! There lay her nearest and dearest, and on the ghastly face of one of them she perceived a look as of triumph—it was the face of Alesco!

Such stories are all too common. They are not forgotten. As friends gather round

their log fires, they talk of these things burnt in upon their memories. Their village is their world; they are fiercely patriotic, and all hearts are stirred with the terrible spirit of retaliation, so that, as one young man said to me, "I live in the hope that one day I may revenge the death of my grandfather"—a much-loved grandfather who had been tortured to death in a manner I wish it were possible for me to forget. It is but natural that the deed should leave a lifelong horror in that impulsive warm heart. And what was the crime for which his grandfather was first tortured and then murdered? That of being a schoolmaster!

*Education.*—The difficulties of education press heavily on a people so keen, as these Bulgars are, for the instruction of their children. All teachers, men and women, are marked as the most dangerous element in the community. Often, under the slightest pretext, or no pretext at all, they are seized and carried off to prison, from which they know only too well they may never be released. One wonders they venture upon such a calling, but these young men and women are not

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cowards, and they know what education has done, and is doing, for Bulgaria since her freedom ; so they, belonging to the same race, are eager to teach and be taught. This struck me very forcibly, and I had ample proof of the fact. On the return of the refugees to their ruined villages, one of the first things they were anxious about was the starting of a school. Before any proper building could be erected, some lean-to was put up against any wall which happened to be standing. A teacher was sent for, who had been trained in the Bulgarian School at Salonica, or in that remarkable Robert College, on the Bosphorus, which has had so much to do with the extraordinary development of Bulgaria. Immediately on the arrival of the teacher, his work began. I visited several of such schools, and on witnessing some simple examination, was impressed with the order maintained, the implicit obedience rendered, and the intelligence of the children.

In one instance about sixty children had been gathered into the roughest possible barn, and on my sympathising with the teacher on his difficulties, he answered with

the utmost enthusiasm, "Yes, it is true, but we never know whom we are educating, and I may have some great men and women here, who will be a blessing to my country."

Mr. Arthur Evans, who has travelled so extensively over Turkey for archæological purposes, and before the present insurrectionary movement began, writes as follows of his experience in connection with the educational efforts made in every Christian village:—

"One characteristic in the population—not without its pathetic side—continually struck me. In spite of all the misery and oppression, some attempt was made, even in the smallest villages, to give schooling to the children. In Macedonia, indeed, it needed something of a martyr spirit to exercise the profession of a teacher. The Bulgar teachers were nearly all marked men. It is indeed natural—Turkish rule being what it is—that those who endeavour to enlighten the enslaved population should be regarded as natural enemies. It is true that the Turkish authorities had little to complain of in the matter actually taught in the schools. It was subject

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to an iron censorship. I have at various times had occasion to examine the school books and even to assist at an examination of the children. In most cases history was entirely excluded, and in the rare instances where it was allowed nothing might be taught later than the time of Julius Cæsar. Maps of Europe were forbidden, and geography was rigorously confined to Asia, Africa, and the Antipodes.

Notwithstanding these limitations, no teacher was at any moment free from the danger of arbitrary arrest. Whole batches of schoolmasters have been at various times deported. Many of them were tortured. Some have disappeared without a trace in Anatolian prisons. As to schoolmistresses, the risks attending their calling were found to be too terrible, and the girls' schools that had been attempted in the country districts have had to be closed."

The consequence of all this is that, every year, about 100,000 Bulgars go abroad to earn their living, and there are now double that number from Macedonia living in Bulgaria, driven from their own land through

the intolerable hardships they suffered—men who would make their country prosperous if it was under decent management. The Turkish Government, as they say, “starting from the principle that hunger kills the passions,” uses every means to reduce the Christian population to misery.

The peasant is a slave in every sense of the word. He has to cultivate the soil at his tyrant’s beck and call. The Bey not only makes him and his wife work for him, but is, moreover, the master of the husband, whose wife and daughter have to do his bidding. He can choose the prettiest girls and send them into his harem, and that is exactly what he does.

It is only too obvious that under Turkish rule there is no justice for the Christian, and no attempt is made to improve the condition of the people generally. Development is arrested, and to remain a Christian means to court death in some terrible manner.

We are told on good authority, that the “process of extermination is recorded by the Turkish authorities, and duly reported at Constantinople.” Documents from Hilmi

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Pacha's archives have fallen into the hands of one of the Consuls. In these it is stated that the total number of villages destroyed in the Monastir district is ninety-three. There are many other places in Macedonia in which the destruction has been equally great. Added to this, there is the Adrianople neighbourhood, in which the ruined hamlets can hardly fall very far short of the above number.

The indictment is an awful one, and to think that we have any part or lot in this matter, is almost too terrible to dwell upon.

"It is not blessedness to know that thou thyself art blessed;

True joy was never yet by one, nor yet by two possessed.

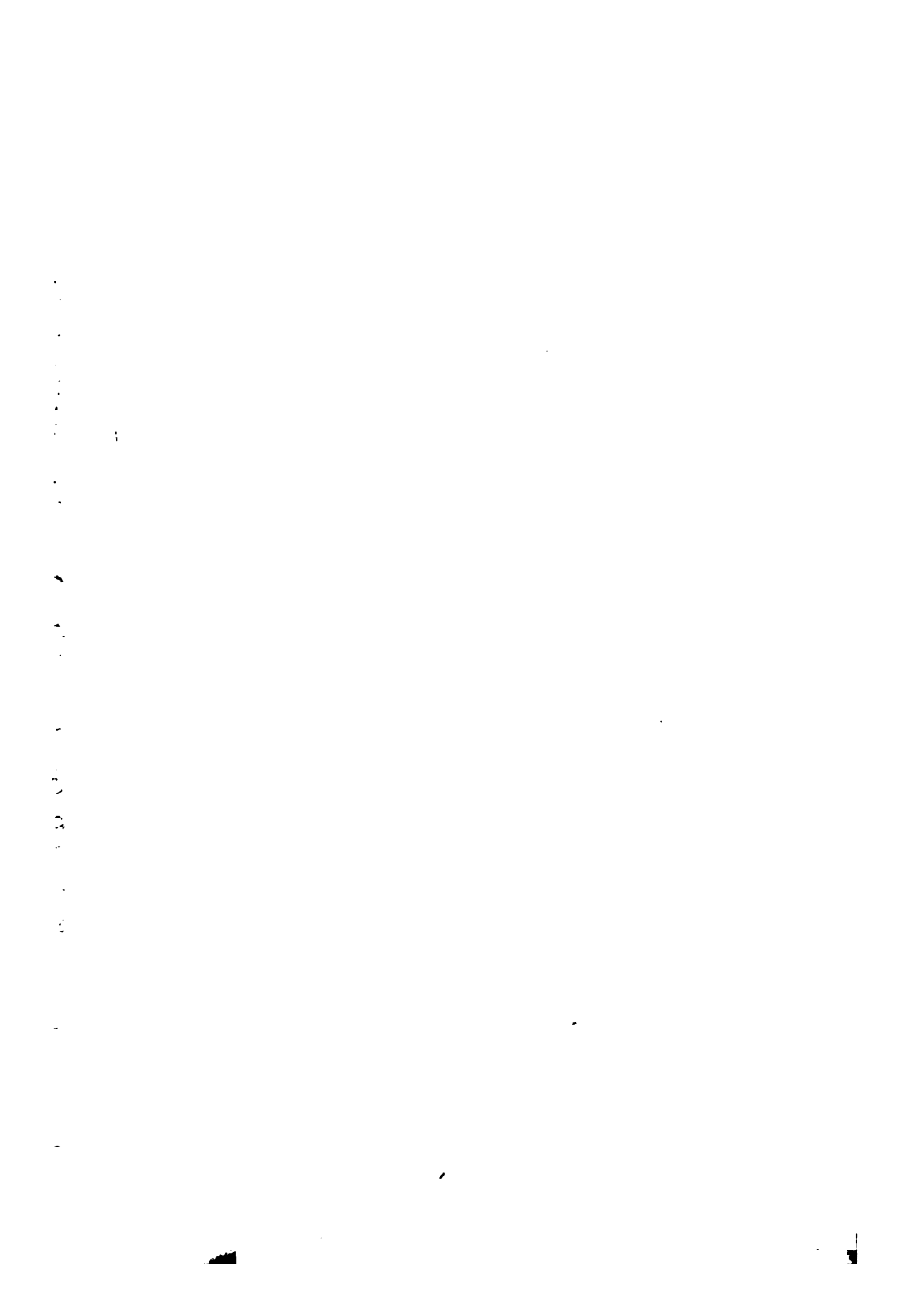
Nor to the many is it given, but only to the all;

The joy that leaves one heart unblessed should be for mine too small."

These words are the expression of a Brahmin, and we, who take to ourselves the beautiful designation of Christians, should surely not only say as much, but act upon the saying, by bringing joy into other lives—we, who are taught by our Lord and Master to "bind



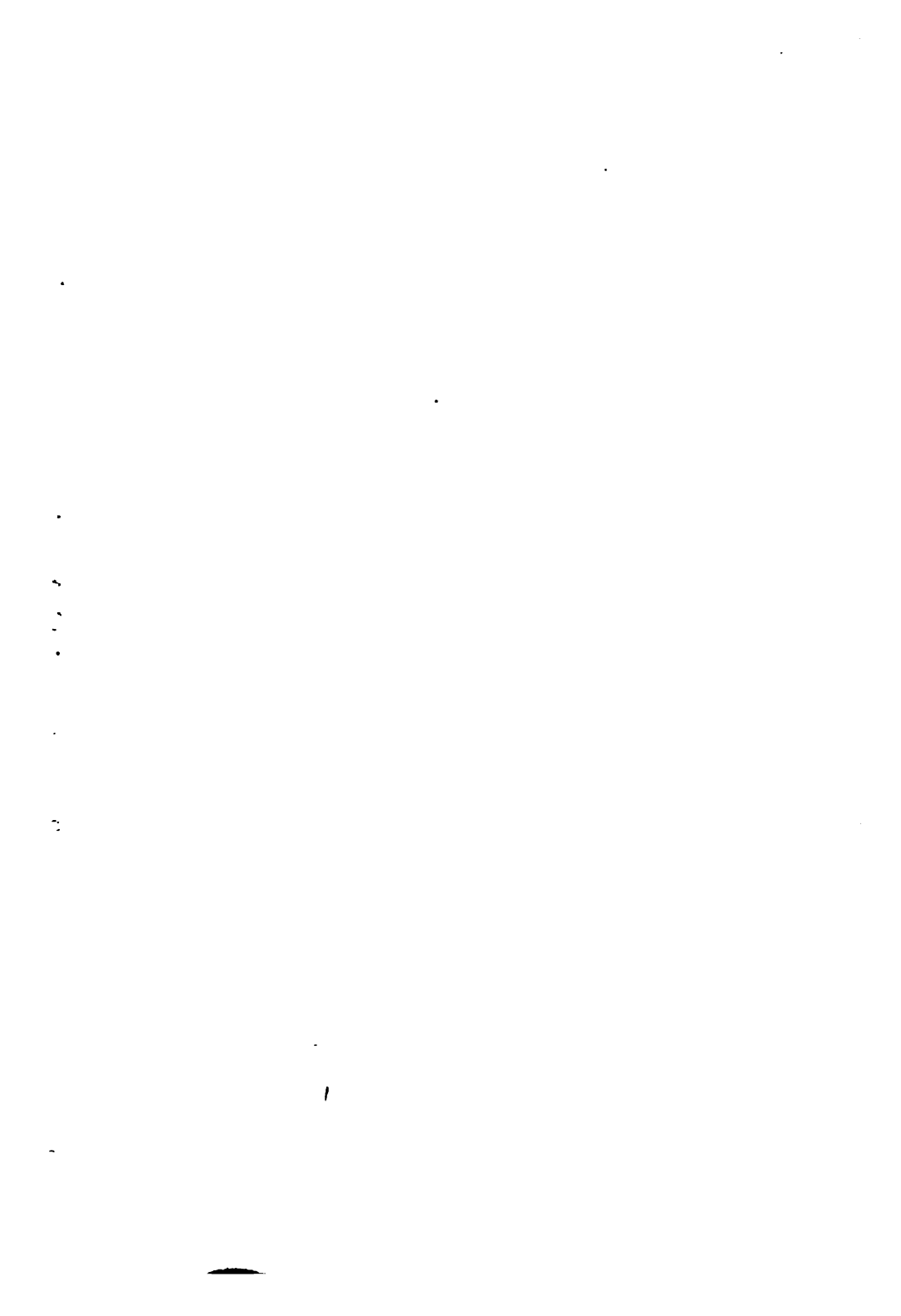
up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound ;" we, who are to change the "garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." We are entrusted with this gracious and wonderful work. A glorious opportunity offers itself for us now to fulfil this "Programme."



## THE FUTURE

"The time is ripe, and rotten-ripe for change:  
Then let it come: I have no dread of what  
Is called for by the instinct of mankind."

J. RUSSELL LOWELL.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE FUTURE

THE Orientals have no conception that men have the right to be free. One only should, in their estimation, have perfect liberty. Such a principle must inevitably lead to caprice, ferocity, and brutal recklessness.

In Turkey the Sultan rules, and his authority is the Koran, a book announcing itself as one "in which there is no doubt." The Muhamedan preacher is also the lawyer. The chief ecclesiastical functionary at Constantinople is the chief legal officer. He expounds the text according to his own sweet will. The Koran is purely Arabian; knows no thought of progress, but, as it has been said, "stays at home." By it polygamy is allowed and encouraged. "Take in marriage

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of the women, who please you, two, three, or four; but, if ye fear that ye cannot act equitably, one; or those whom your right hand have acquired—*i.e.*, your slaves" (N. 3). Their Prophet was endowed with special privileges in this respect.

The immense contrast which exists between Muhamedanism and Christianity is well shown in the following lines—

"Muhamed's truth lay in a holy book,  
Christ's in a Sacred Life.

So while the world rolls on from change to change,  
And realms of thought expand,  
The letter stands without expanse or range,  
Stiff as a dead man's hand.

While, as the life blood fills the growing form,  
The spirit Christ has shed  
Flows through the ripening ages, fresh and warm,  
More felt than heard or read." \*

From such a system as their religion inculcates, what can be expected but what we find? We have no word of complaint for the Turk as such. The Turkish peasant is a good fellow. The Turkish soldier, under decent control, would act with something

\* Milnes, "Palm Leaves."

like humanity; but the Turkish Government being what it is, the ragged and unpaid troops are driven to robbery and murder, and learn through their own wretchedness to behave, generally, like wild beasts.

All the wealth of the country goes to keep up the splendour of the Court and of the luxurious palaces of the Sultan's daughters, while the army is in rags. I saw hundreds of the soldiers without boots, having only leathers tied round their feet with string; their trousers in tatters; their coats in ribbons; the only things about them up to date being their rifles—weapons of cruelty!

What a revelation that is of the condition of things! Some of the younger Pachas are fine fellows, with enlightened views and a desire for better government, but they live in fear of what may befall them if they are known to hold progressive views. The prisons are full, not only of Christians, but of the flower of the Turkish race.

It has not been till after a long period of misery and misrule, of unparalleled cruelty, and of many vain hopes, that the Christian population have conceived the idea of pro-

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testing, and of rising *en masse* in revolution. They tell us now that, notwithstanding the voluntary sacrifices they have made, they have never desired to keep up a condition of rebellion, since it is they who suffer the most from it. Their demands have been moderate, but they declare emphatically that, as long as Sultan Hamid rules, there can be no peace, and they point out that, according to the teaching of the Koran, he is forced to keep up warfare against the Christians.

They ask for a European Governor, who can establish order and justice in their country. Pathetically they tell us that all we have done in the way of carrying out our promises has been to make notes of events as they have happened, to repeat our promises, and to hold interesting councils and conferences. It is therefore quite natural that their hopes of any permanent change resulting from the "Reforms" have died away. They know what such projects are worth better, perhaps, than we do, and how, when any amelioration has taken place, it has depended upon one individual of exceptional power, courage, and love of justice. As far back as 1842, our



ambassador, Sir Stratford Canning, who was mainly instrumental in securing the freedom of Greece, and who gained, by his courage and his straightforward bearing, the title of "Ambassador *par excellence*," made the Sultan of that day bow down before his righteous indignation in his efforts to bring about very drastic reforms. Through his instrumentality, many injustices toward the Christians were stopped, for Sir Stratford aimed at equal citizenship for all. He obtained a promise that no one, on becoming a Christian, should suffer on that account.

Torture was abolished, and the poll-tax was repealed. Moreover, the crying disgrace of the present day was, for the time, at an end, since Christian evidence in the law courts was to be allowed.

These changes took place in 1844. In the Life of Sir Stratford—afterwards Lord Stratford de Redcliffe—we read that, "so long as he was at his post, reforms accumulated, and his vigilant eye watched every quarter of the Ottoman Empire, to see where offences were, and from whence they came, and to bring condign punishment on offenders. No Pacha

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was safe if a complaint came against him. His power was unique, and he used it for no selfish or ambitious end: his arm was stretched forth in the cause of right and justice alone."

In 1854, the Crimean War put a stop to all Reforms. In 1858, Lord Stratford left the Porte, and in 1861 the Sultan Abdul-Medjid died. Then disappeared all hope of any real justice being administered to the Christian population. Though our Ambassador accomplished so much, he lived to see that his efforts had been in vain, and, later on, confessed that it was hopeless to expect any permanent reformation in Turkish rule.

We are now, and have been for some time, brought face to face again with "Reforms," which still rest chiefly on the Sultan's promise. When we know that the Pachas, and the best of them too, openly avow their disregard of such promises, it is worse than idle to pay the slightest attention to them.

The Koran imposes on Muhamedans the sacred duty of fighting against the Christians, and of exterminating them. It is not the fanaticism of the Turk we have to deal with,

but the teachings of the religion of Islam. As long as the following prayer is recited in the mosques, what hope is there of improvement?

“O Lord of all creatures! O Allah! destroy the Infidels and Polytheists, thine enemies, the enemies of the religion. O Allah! make their children orphans, and defile their abodes! cause their feet to slip; give them and their families, their households and their women, their children, their relations by marriage, their brothers and their friends, their possessions and their race, their wealth and their lands, as booty to the Moslems, O Lord of all creatures!” A few more extracts from the Koran may help us to understand the Muhamedan attitude toward infidels so called, and the instruction which is continually being given in the mosques.

“The Lord spake unto the angels, saying: ‘Verily I am with you; therefore confirm those who believe. I will cast a dread into the hearts of unbelievers. Therefore strike off their heads, and strike off all the ends of their fingers.’”

“This,” says Sale, the translator, in a foot-

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note, "is the punishment expressly assigned to the enemies of the Muhamedan religion, though the Moslems did not inflict it on the prisoners they took at Beor, for which they were reprehended." (Chap. viii.),

"O prophet! wage war against the unbelievers and the hypocrites, and be severe unto them; for their dwelling shall be hell; an unhappy journey shall it be thither." (Chap. ix.)

"Verily the worst cattle in the sight of God are those who are obstinate infidels, and will not believe. . . . O prophet! stir up the faithful: if 20 of you persevere with constancy, they shall overcome 200, and if there be 100 of you, they shall overcome 1,000 of those who believe not, because they are a people that do not understand. . . . It has not been granted unto any prophet that he should possess captives until he had made a great slaughter of infidels in the earth." (Ch. viii.)

"And when the months wherein ye are not allowed to attack them are past, kill the idolaters wherever ye shall find them, and take them prisoners and besiege them, and lay wait for them in every convenient place.

But if they shall repent and observe the appointed times of prayer and pay the legal alms, dismiss them freely, for God is gracious and merciful." (Ch. ix.)

The Turks are a religious people. I have rarely seen anything more solemn or impressive than their simple, reverent worship. In the midst of a crowd of men stands the preacher, who, with wonderful eloquence, keeps his hearers spellbound till the closing sentences, when thousands repeat a few words audibly, and then prostrate themselves in prayer. But that they do not wish the outside world to know what they are praying about, or what they are doing, is clear from the proclamation put forth from the palace when the Sultan's birthday comes round, and which the foreign newspapers are compelled to publish in order that the world may believe that the Sultan is a kind father to his Christian subjects.

The following appeared when I was in Turkey:—

THE BIRTHDAY OF HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY  
THE SULTAN.

To-day, birthday of H.I.M. the Sultan, the hearts of all the inhabitants of the vast Ottoman Empire,

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as also of faithful subjects of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan residing in other countries, are beating with joy, and all, as one man, pray the Almighty for the long life of the beloved Sovereign. This festival differs from that so joyfully celebrated a few weeks ago, inasmuch as that of September 1st marks a new era in Turkish history—the advent to the throne of the wise and powerful ruler, whose grandiose achievements are justly the pride of a nation, of which the progressive civilisation is a subject of admiration for the rest of the world. To-day's festival commemorates the birthday of the benefactor whom the nation venerates as a kind father, and whose charity knows no end. Indeed it is every day our pleasurable duty to chronicle facts which bear new testimony to the greatness of heart of the gracious Sovereign who is ever ready to relieve the distressed and ensure the welfare of his subjects, whatever their creed or station in life. Our columns would not suffice to record all His Majesty's charitable deeds during the past year. By paternally meting out charity, as he does, His Imperial Majesty not only elicits the gratitude of the nation, but also sets a good example to his people, and thence the charitable sentiments and the generous hospitality which are characteristic of the Turk, and which largely tend to establish unison amongst the peoples under the mighty sceptre of His Imperial Majesty Abdul Hamid Khan II. Foreigners residing in Turkey profit no less than the natives by the Sovereign's generous and hospitable sentiments, and it is therefore our duty to join in the prayers offered up throughout the vast Ottoman Empire on the occasion of His Majesty's birthday. Long live His Imperial Majesty the Sultan Abdul Hamid Khan II.!

This appeared in the English newspapers!  
The language used does not fit in very well

with the prayer that "the heads and the fingers of the infidels may be cut off," or with indubitable history.

As a commentary stand the following facts: On the 23rd of April a band of Turks appeared at midnight at Betolia. No disturbance had arisen, and no attack had occurred on the part of the insurgents. The soldiers roused the people by smashing their windows. Forty of the inmates were severely injured, and fourteen were killed. In the immediate neighbourhood forty more were tortured, two dying under the agony, and the rest were cast into prison. The Sultan manifested his approval, by presenting the Pacha at the head of the regiment with a fresh decoration to wear on his breast—a diamond of blood—as the poor people call it. In another instance the first step which Hilmi Pacha took in connection with a village supposed to be harbouring weapons, was to send troops and Bashi-bazouks to search for arms, and to discover the names of the members of the revolutionary movement. The peasants were beaten until they lost consciousness; then they were revived with water, beaten again, and told, if they did

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not reveal where the rifles were kept, they would be sprinkled with petroleum and burnt alive.

What a mockery it all is, this attempt to hoodwink Europe—only too ready, alas ! to believe anything rather than that she ought to interfere. Because the Turkish peasant is a good fellow, and because the Bulgars have learned those vices which always follow oppression and injustice, therefore we are told that one is as good, or as bad, as the other. Traders and politicians repeat such things till it is thought there is excellent excuse for our doing nothing.

Sir Oliver Lodge, so highly esteemed, and deservedly so, has said, "What I feel about the condition of the country is that it is not the massacres alone, or even chiefly; it is the long-continued abominable Government that has, at last, made the people desperate, and has endowed them with the courage of despair. We in this country do not know what bad government is." And it is almost impossible for those who have not travelled in the East to know. But surely it is sufficient, as we read history, to see that Christian races have



always struggled to be free from Ottoman rule, against which, with one voice, they have testified.

Some tell us the age of chivalry is past, but says Kingsley, "The age of chivalry is never past as long as there is a wrong left unredressed on earth, and a man or woman left to say, I will redress that wrong, or spend my life in the attempt."

What is it we want? What is it we ask? Only a little enthusiasm to help and uphold those in power who have this matter at heart, and who should insist on a European Governor being appointed.

Dr. Hodgkin, in speaking at the National Conference on this question, in March last, expressed himself energetically in favour of a Christian Governor as the remedy for the present evils. He said—

"I am very strongly of the belief that the solution will be found in the appointment of a Christian Governor who shall not be responsible to the Porte, and who shall not be removable without the consent of the Powers. I venture to speak with a little personal experience, having had the pleasure

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and privilege of travelling in Palestine, and seeing there how everything is falling to ruin—the miserable tracks which do duty instead of roads, &c. The Governor of Palestine takes all the taxes, makes the subjects contribute, and yet fulfils none of the duties or scarcely any of the duties of a Governor. You pass the little frontier—almost imperceptibly—and find you are in an entirely different state of things. Villages are springing up, fields are being cultivated, and you feel at once that there is evidence that the inhabitants may reckon with safety on reaping the fruit of their labours. You feel at once that you have passed from an ill-governed, or practically no-governed, State to a State in which the Governor recognises his responsibility. What is the cause? England and France claimed the privilege, the glory, of having set the province of Lebanon free, of having put it in a position in which it is possible for a civilised people to exist. It was no great thing we asked for. The province of Lebanon has no constitutional representation; no beautiful theories of government have been set up there, but they are simply under a

Governor who knows that he is responsible to men who will hold him to his duty, and a man who wishes to do his duty to the subject population, and who does fulfil it. It is not revocable—his office is not revocable—at the will of the Sultan, merely as the result of some Court intrigue. That Government which was set up in Lebanon by Lord Dufferin and his French colleagues, the Government which was one of the noblest proofs of the *entente cordiale* which we are so glad to see rehabilitated in our own day, has made all the difference to the inhabitants of Lebanon between misery and happiness and prosperity. And I believe very strongly—and I think my friends around me believe—that it is in some such system as this that the solution of this problem will be found.”

The idea is steadily gaining ground that this will be the only effectual way of dealing with this question, so as to avoid more bloodshed through a European war, the consequences of which we dare not even contemplate, but which those who understand the critical conditions of affairs at

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present feel will come if we remain indifferent. Every one who has studied this question has now come to the conclusion that reform cannot come from within, but must be enforced from without. In an article by Arthur Ponsonby on our British Policy, there is a striking paragraph as to what resolute action would do. He writes: "The Sultan's fear of the English Press has become traditional. It is based not only on a natural aversion to having disagreeable things published about himself and his Empire, but on the apprehension that the popular feeling which the Press kindles may set in motion a force of which he stands in mortal terror, and which he dreads more than the plots of the young Turks, more than secret societies or revolution, more perhaps than the knife of the assassin, and that is the approach of the British fleet." The writer is confident, as all are who understand the Turk, that a firm determination to gain our object would induce him to yield. He is sharp enough to know when we are in earnest and when we are not. Mr. Ponsonby adds most justly: "It is not at all a matter of whether we are prepared to

fight, but whether we have got the courage to stand up boldly, not for the sake of material gain, but in the cause of international justice and equity, by fulfilling our moral obligations to a Christian people, and our Treaty obligations to an oppressed race."

Their belief in us is still strong. The sympathetic help sent out from England for the refugees in Macedonia and Thrace has raised their hopes, and longing eyes are directed to our country, whose institutions and history all speak of freedom.

"Can Christian hope survive so far below  
The level of the happiness of man?"

Yes, it is possible. Their faith in God, their simple, childlike trust, their belief in our power to deliver them, are all strong with the strength of primitive Christianity, and have had more than anything else to do with the quiet which has reigned for the past sixteen months. The people are waiting and watching, but they do not intend waiting another quarter of a century. "Sur-tout point de zèle" is a favourite maxim in high quarters, we are told. I am sorry for it.

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If we have grown so selfish and so luxurious, that we care more for our own comfort than for the real welfare of our fellow-creatures, whom we have pledged ourselves to help, we are, indeed, brothers of the order of Cain, having made our own his motto—"Am I my brother's keeper?"

Mr. Gladstone, in a thrilling peroration in connection with the Montenegrins, said: "Whenever in the world a high aspiration was entertained, or a noble blow was struck, it was to England that the eyes of the oppressed were always turned—to this favourite, this darling home of so much privilege and so much happiness, where the people that had built up a noble edifice for themselves would, it was well known, be ready to do what in them lay to secure the benefit of the same inestimable boon for others. . . . A portion of these unhappy people are still making an effort to retrieve what they have lost, but have not ceased to love and desire. Another portion, cowed and beaten down to the ground, hardly venturing to look upwards even to their Father in Heaven, have extended their

hands to you;—they have sent you their petition, they have prayed for your help and protection. They have told you that all they seek is to be delivered from an intolerable burden of woe and shame. The removal of that load of woe and shame is a great and noble prize. It is a prize well worth competing for. It is not yet too late to try and win it.”

This was written in 1878, and it still applies most truly to the circumstances of to-day in Turkey.

John Ruskin's words come back to me as most appropriate in thinking of the choice, now before us, of good or evil, right or wrong, truth or falsehood, courage or cowardice.

“So far as you desire to possess rather than to give; so far as you look for power to command, instead of to bless; so far as your own prosperity seems to you to issue out of contest or rivalry of any kind with other men or other nations; so long as the hope before you is for supremacy instead of love; so long you are serving the Lord of all that is last and least.” Yes, so long nothing will be done to give that

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freedom and liberty to others which is so dear to ourselves: so long we shall not act with that spirit of moral integrity which is as important for a nation as for an individual.

We hold our position among the peoples of the earth to-day only in so far as the character of our own nation is framed in obedience to the laws of God. If we become self-indulgent and self-seeking, untruthful and proud, solicitous only for our own safety and freedom, caring little for those whom we have promised to protect, the decline of our greatness has set in.

It is good to have contributed to the relief of these starving peasants. It will be better to work for their emancipation, to exercise the strength which we, as a nation, possess, not that we may have more material wealth, but that, having had the sweet vision of "Peace on Earth, Good-will among men," we may extend the message in a practical manner to "them that sit in darkness."

"Go put your creed into your deed,  
Nor speak with double tongue."



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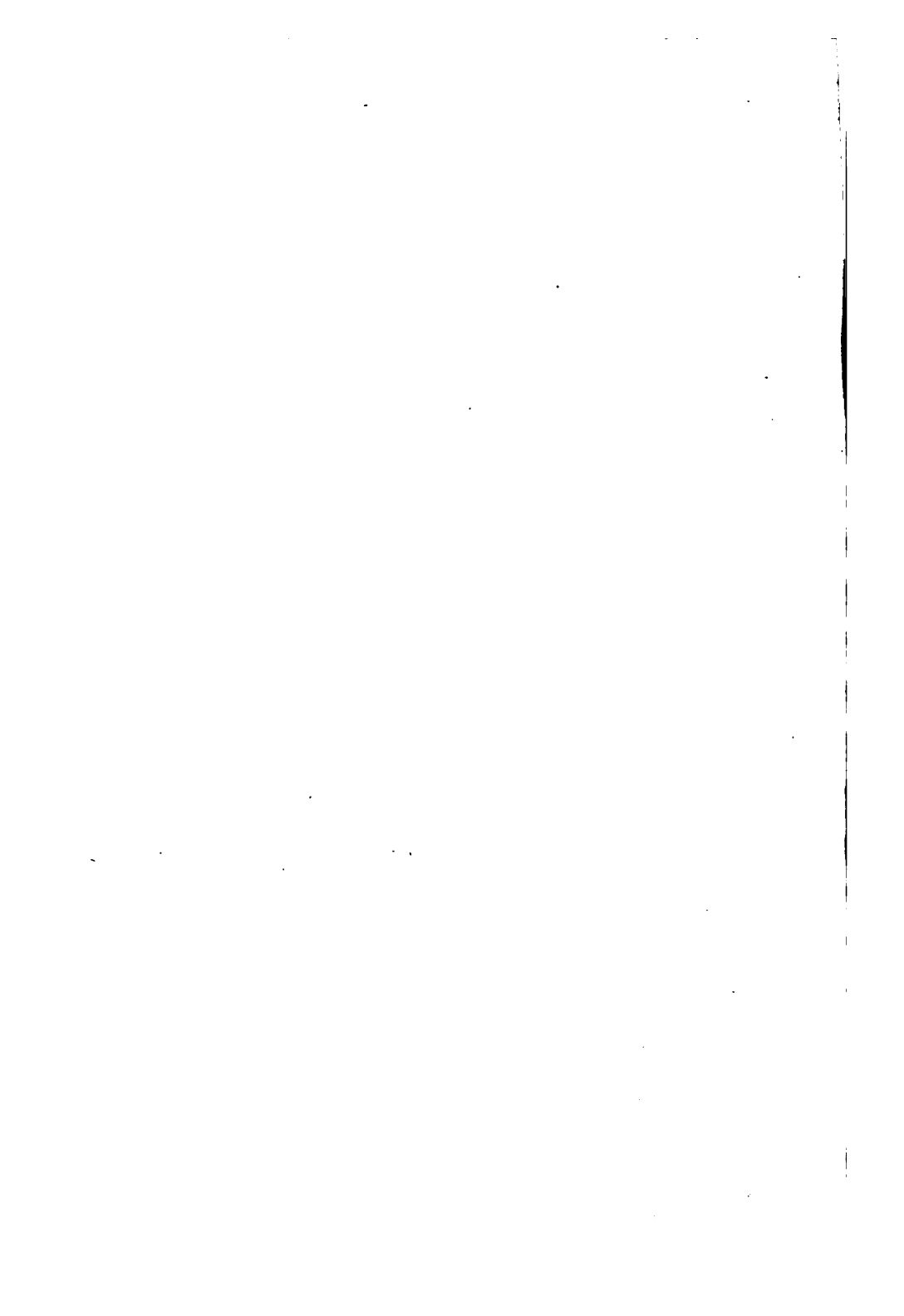
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